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THE WORKS

OF

ANNA LÆTITIA BARBAULD.

WITH A MEMOIR

By LUCY AIKIN.

Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er
Scatters from her pictured urn
Thoughts that breathe and words that burn.

93786

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTERS TO DR. AIKIN.

Palgrave, 1774.

THANKS to my dear brother for his letter, and the copy of verses, which Mr. B. and I admire much. As to your system, I do not know what to say; I think I could make out just the contrary with as plausible arguments: as thus, Women are naturally inclined not only to love, but to all the soft and gentle affections; all the tender attentions and kind sympathies of nature. When, therefore, one of our sex shows any particular complacency towards one of yours, it may be resolved into friendship; into a temper naturally caressing, and those endearing intercourses of life which to a woman are become habitual. But when

man, haughty, independent man, becomes sensible to all the delicacies of sentiment, and softens his voice and address to the tone of *les manières douces,* it is much to be suspected a stronger power than friendship has worked the change. *You* are hardly social creatures till your minds are humanized and subdued by that passion which alone can tame you to "all the soft civilities of life." Your heart requires a stronger fire to melt it than ours does: the chaste and gentle rays of friendship, like star-beams may play upon it without effect;—it will only yield to gross material fire. There is a pretty flight for you! In short, women I think may be led on by sentiment to passion; but men must be subdued by passion before they can taste sentiment. Well! I protest I think I have the best of the argument all to nothing. I'll go ask Mr. Barbauld. Yes; he says my system will do. I beg I may have Dr. E.'s opinion upon it, as I take him to be a pretty casuist in these affairs. I hope I am by this time richer by a nephew or niece: if it is a boy, I claim it; if a girl, I will be content to stay for the next. I am afraid *my poor child** is tossing upon the waves, for I have not heard yet of its arrival in London; and I cannot help feeling all a parent's anxiety for

* Her Devotional Pieces, sent from Norfolk by sea to be printed at Warrington.—EDITOR.

its fate and establishment in the world: several people here are so kind as to inquire after it, but I can give them no satisfaction.

Palgrave, Sept. 9, 1775.

I GIVE you joy with all my heart, my dear brother, on the little hero's appearance in the world, and hope he will live to be as famous a man as any of his namesakes. I shall look upon you now as a very respectable man, as being entitled to all the honours and privileges of a father of three children. I would advise you to make one a hero, as you have determined; another a scholar; and for the third,—send him to us, and we will bring him up for a Norfolk farmer, which I suspect to be the best business of the three. I have not forgot Arthur, and send you herewith a story for his edification; but I must desire you to go on with it. When you have brought the shepherd Hidallan a sheet further in his adventures, send him back to me, and I will take up the pen: it will be a very sociable way of writing, and I doubt not but it will produce something new and clever. The great thing to be avoided in these things is, the having any plan in your head: nothing cramps your fancy so much; and I protest to you I am entirely clear from that inconvenience.

Pray can you tell me any thing about Crashaw?

I have read some verses of his, prefixed to Cornaro's treatise, so exceedingly pretty, that I am persuaded he must have written more, and should be glad to see them: I would transcribe the verses, but I think you have Cornaro in your library.

Be it known to you, that Palgrave seminary will soon abound with poets, even as the green fields abound with grasshoppers. Our usher is a poet profest; and two of the lads have lately exercised their pens the same way, and not amiss. One especially has written two or three pieces, which, if I am not deceived by the partiality I cannot help feeling for the little urchins, I may say are really clever for a boy of twelve years old. Now I am upon poetical subjects, I must tell you that a young clergyman in this neighbourhood is writing a play, which he did us the honour to submit to our criticism. The subject is, the resistance of the Chilese to the Spaniards, by which they recovered their independence. I am afraid I gave him very wicked advice; for I recommended it to him to re-convert his Indian from Christianity to Heathenism, and to make his chiefs a little more quarrelsome.

I believe the Devotional Pieces have met with the fate of poor Jonah, and been swallowed up by some whale,—perhaps out of pity and compassion, to save them in his jaws from the more terrible teeth of the critics. St. Anthony, I think, preached

to the fishes; perhaps I may have the same honour. I should as soon hope to inspire a porpoise with devotion, as a turtle-eater.

You must know I find one inconvenience in franks; one never knows when to have done. In a common letter you fill your sheet, and there's an end; but with a frank you may write on and on for ever: I have tired two pens already. But I will write no more to you: I will write to poor Patty, who wants amusement,—so farewell! Go and study your Greek, and do not interrupt us.

And how do you do, my dear Patty? let me take a peep at this boy. Asleep, is he? Never mind; draw the cradle-curtains softly, and let me have a look. Upon my word, a noble lad! dark eyes, like his mother, and a pair of cheeks! You may keep him a few months yet before you pack him up in the hamper; and then I desire you will send him with all speed; for you know he is to be mine.....

May every blessing attend you and yours, and all the dear society at Warrington.

DEAR BROTHER,

I DOUBT not but you have been grumbling in your gizzard for some time, and muttering between your teeth, "What is this lazy sister of ours about"? Now to prove to you that I am not lazy, I will tell you what I have been about. First, then, making

up beds; secondly, scolding my maids, preparing for company; and lastly, drawing up and delivering lectures on Geography. Give me joy of our success, for we shall have twenty-seven scholars before the vacation, and two more have bespoke places at Midsummer; so that we do not doubt of being soon full: nay, sir, I can assure you it is said in this country, that it will soon be a favour to be on Mr. Barbauld's list:—you have no objection, I hope, to a little boasting.

I thank you, my dear brother, for so kindly drawing your pen in my defence. An admirer of Popery! Heaven help their wise heads! when it was one of my earliest aversions. But this I see, that in religious and political affairs if a person does not enlist under a party, he is sure to meet with censure from party. I had not seen the charge till I had your letter: we had had the Review too, but I had read it carelessly. If they do not insert your letter, I should be glad to see it.

Yes, Sterne's Letters are paltry enough, and so are Lady Luxborough's, which we ran through in the course of an afternoon. I am afraid the public will be sated with letters before we publish our correspondence. I could make a neat pocket-volume or two of yours, and of Mr. Barbauld's a quarto.

Adieu, yours ever.

Yes, I was somewhat lazy in writing, I confess; but upon my word I could not tell how to help it, so busy was I: and, by the way, I think I have sometimes been as long without hearing from Warrington. Well! we will all mend if we can.

Mr. Barbauld thanks you for your elegant Pliny, which he intends to make a school-book immediately after the vacation. Your Tacitus, too, seems a very good scheme, and we hope to see it in time. But I own I cannot help wishing you would undertake some original work, either of fancy or elegant criticism; you have the powers for both. I think we must some day sew all our fragments together, and make a *Joineriana* of them. Let me see:—I have, half a ballad; the first scene of a play; a plot of another, all but the catastrophe; half a dozen loose similies, and an eccentric flight or two among the fairies.

Did I tell you the boys are going to act the First Part of Henry IV., and I am busy making paper vandykes, and trimming up their hats with feathers? Do you know that we make a trip to Holland this vacation?

Dear Brother,

To my sister and yourself Mr. Barbauld and I have a request to make, in which, though perhaps

it may be rather singular, we are very seriously in earnest; and therefore, whether you grant or deny, we hope you will neither laugh at us nor take it amiss. Without further preface, it is this. You enjoy a blessing Providence has hitherto denied to us,—that of children: you have already several, and seem very likely to have a numerous family. As to ourselves, having been thus long without prospect of any, it is, to say the least, very uncertain whether that hope, which most I believe form when they marry, will ever be fulfilled. Some, indeed, say to us, that considering how large a family we have of others' children, 'tis rather fortunate we have none of our own. And true it is, that employed as we are in the business of education, we have many of the cares and some of the pleasures of a parent; but the latter very imperfectly. We have them not early enough to contract the fondness of affection which early care alone can give; we have them not long enough to see the fruit of our culture; and we have not enough the disposal of them to follow our own plans and schemes in their education. We wish for one who might be wholly ours: and we think that if a child was made ours by being given young into our hands, we could love it, and make it love us so well, as to supply in a great measure the want of the real relationship. We know there are many instances of people who have taken the

greatest satisfaction in, and felt the highest fondness for, children who by some accident have been thrown upon their arms. Why then should not we seek out and choose some object of such an affection? and where can we better seek it than in a brother's family?

Our request then, in short, is this: that you will permit us to adopt one of your children; which of them, we leave to you;—that you will make it ours in every sense in which it is possible to make it,—that you will transfer to us all the care and all the authority of a parent; that we should provide for it, educate it, and have the entire direction of it as far into life as the parental power itself extends. Now I know not what to say to induce you to make us such a gift. Perhaps you will entirely deny it; and then we must acquiesce: for I am sensible it is not a small thing we ask; nor can it be easy for a parent to part with a child. This I would say, from a number, *one* may more easily be spared. Though it makes a very material difference in happiness whether a person has children or no children, it makes, I apprehend, little or none whether he has three, or four; five, or six; because four or five are enow to exercise all his whole stock of care and affection. We should gain, but you would not lose. I would likewise put you in mind that you would not part with it to strangers; the connexion between you and it would not be broken off: you

would see it (I hope), hear of it often; and it should be taught to love you, if it had not learnt that lesson before. Our child must love our brother and sister. Its relation to you is likewise a presumption that we shall not be wanting in that love for it which will be necessary to make it happy. I believe both Mr. Barbauld and myself are much disposed to love children, and that we could soon grow fond of any one who was amiable and entirely under our care. How then can we fail to love a child for whom at setting out we shall have such a stock of affection as we must have for yours? I hope, too, we should have too right a sense of things to spoil it; and we see too much of children to indulge an over-anxious care. But you know us well enough to be able to judge in general how we should educate it, and whether to your satisfaction. Conscience and affection, I hope, would unite in inciting us to fulfill an engagement we should thus voluntarily take upon ourselves, to the best of our abilities.

Our situation is not a certain one, nor have we long tried it; but we have all the reason in the world to hope that if things go on as they have hitherto done, we should be able to provide for a child in a decent and comfortable manner.

Now, my dear brother and sister, if you consent, give us which of your boys you please: if you had girls, perhaps we should ask a girl rather;

and if we might choose amongst your boys, we could make perhaps a choice;—but that we do not expect you will let us. Give us, then, which you will; only let him be healthy, inoculated, and as young as you can possibly venture him to undertake the journey. This last circumstance is indispensable: for if he were not quite young, we should not gain over him the influence, we could not feel for him the affection, which would be necessary: besides, if at all able to play with our pupils, he would immediately mix with them, and would be little more to us than one of the schoolboys. Do not, therefore, put us off by saying that one of yours when he is old enough shall pay us a visit. To see any of yours at any time would no doubt give us the highest pleasure; but that does not by any means come up to what we now ask. We now leave the matter before you;—consider maturely, and give us your answer.

O no! I never promised to fill this second sheet. Good bye to you.

1776.

YOUR kind and acceptable letter would have met with an earlier answer, if we could either of us have commanded time to write. The manner in which you receive our proposal gives us great pleasure. My dear tender Patty! I wonder not that your softness takes alarm at the idea of part-

ing with any of your sweet blossoms. All I can say is, that the greater the sacrifice, the more we shall think ourselves obliged to you, and the stronger ties we shall think ourselves under to supply, as far as possible, to the child of our adoption the tenderness and care of the parents we take it from. Though we should be content with either, yet of the two we shall like better Charles, if you determine to give him us, than the unborn;—perhaps, however, by this time I am wrong in calling him so: but if he was fixed upon, it would be longer before the scheme could take effect, and more uncertain whether he would live and thrive. This, however, is a point you must determine for us: we shall acquiesce in either.

You are very favourable to my fragments;—fragments, however, they are like to continue unless I had a little more time. I want much to see your Essays,—how do you proceed with them? To attack Shakespear! heresy indeed! I will desire Mr. Montague to chastise you, except by way of penance you finish the ode you once began in his praise. I am of your opinion, however, that we idolize Shakespear rather too much for a Christian country. That inconsistencies may be found in his characters is certain: yet, notwithstanding that, character is his distinguishing excellence; and though he had not the learning of the schools in his head, he had the theatre of

the world before him, and could make reflections on what he saw. An equal vein of poetry runs through the works of some of his cotemporaries: but his writings are most peculiarly marked by good sense and striking characters; so that I think you do him not justice if you call him only a poet.

Palgrave, 1777.

You have given us too much pleasure lately not to deserve an earlier acknowledgement. I hope you will believe we were not so dilatory in reading your book* as we have been in thanking you for it. It is indeed a most elegant performance; your thought is very just, and has never, I believe, been pursued before. Both the defects and beauties which you have noticed are very striking, and the result of the whole work, besides the truths it conveys, is a most pleasing impression left upon the mind from the various and picturesque images brought into view. I hope your Essay will bring down our poets from their garrets to wander about the fields and hunt squirrels. I am clearly of your opinion, that the only chance we have for novelty is by a more accurate observation of the works of Nature, though I think I

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* An Essay on the Application of Natural History to Poetry.—Editor.

should not have confined the track quite so much as you have done to the animal creation, because sooner exhausted than the vegetable; and some of the lines you have quoted from Thomson show with how much advantage the latter may be made the subject of rich description. I think too, since you put me on criticizing, it would not have been amiss if you had drawn the line between the poet and natural historian; and shown how far, and in what cases, the one may avail himself of the knowledge of the other,—at what nice period that knowledge becomes so generally spread as to authorise the poetical describer to use it without shocking the ear by the introduction of names and properties not sufficiently familiar, and when at the same time it retains novelty enough to strike. I have seen some rich descriptions of West Indian flowers and plants,—just, I dare say, but unpleasing merely because their names were uncouth, and forms not known generally enough to be put into verse. It is not, I own, much to the credit of poets,—but it is true,—that we do not seem disposed to take their word for any thing, and never willingly receive *information* from them.

We are wondrous busy in preparing our play, The Tempest; and four or five of our little ones are to come in as fairies; and I am piecing scraps from the Midsummer Night's Dream, &c., to make a little scene instead of the mask of Ceres and

Juno. We have read Gibbon lately, who is certainly a very elegant and learned writer, and a very artful one. No other new books have we yet seen,—they come slow to Norfolk,—but the Diaboliad, the author of which has a pretty sharp pen-knife, and cuts up very handsomely. Many are the literary matters I want to talk over with you when we meet, which I now look forward to as not a far-distant pleasure.

We will come and endeavour to steal away Charles's heart before we run away with his person. Adieu! Heaven bless you and yours.

Palgrave, 1777.

I AM happy that I can now tell you we are all safe at Palgrave, where we arrived last night about ten o'clock. Charles has indeed been an excellent traveller, and though like his great ancestor "some natural tears he shed,"—like him too "he wiped them soon." He had a long sound sleep last night, and has been very busy to-day hunting the puss and the chickens. And now, my dear brother and sister, let me again thank you for this precious gift, the value of which we are both more and more sensible of, as we become better acquainted with his sweet disposition and winning manners. As well as a gift it is a solemn trust,

and it shall be our study to fulfill that trust. The thought of what parents we have taken him from will be a constant motive for our care, tenderness and affection.

Remember us most affectionately to Dr. and Mrs. E., and Betsy ——, and give a kiss for me to Arthur and George; and so you may to Betsy, now I think of it.

Every body here asks, "Pray is Dr. Dodd really to be executed?"—as if we knew the more for having been at Warrington.

Palgrave, Jan. 19, 1778.

It is a real concern to me that I could not write to you from London.....Let me now then begin with telling you, that we two, Miss B——, and one of our boys, got safe to Palgrave this afternoon. And now for the first time Mr. Barbauld and I experienced the pleasure of having something to come home for, and of finding our dear Charles in perfect health and glad to see us again; though wondering a little, and rather grave the first half-hour. Well, and what have you seen, you will say, in London? Why, in the first place, Miss More's new play, which fills the house very well, and is pretty generally liked. Miss More is, I assure you, now very much the ton, and moreover has got six or seven hundred pounds

by her play: I wish I could produce one every two winters; we would not keep school. I cannot say, however, that I cried altogether so much at Percy as I laughed at the School for Scandal, which is one of the wittiest plays I remember to have seen; and I am sorry to add, one of the most immoral and licentious;—in principle I mean, for in language it is very decent. Mrs. Montague, not content with being the queen of literature and elegant society, sets up for the queen of fashion and splendour. She is building a very fine house, has a very fine service of plate, dresses and visits more than ever; and I am afraid will be full as much the woman of the world as the philosopher. Pray, have you read a book to prove Falstaff no coward? I want to know what you think of it: the present age deals in paradoxes. A new play of Cumberland's, and another of Home's, are soon to come out. Charles's little book is very well, but my idea is not executed in it: I must therefore beg you will print one as soon as you can, on fine paper, on one side only, and more space and a clearer line for the chapters. Prefix if you please, to that you are going to print, the following

ADVERTISEMENT.

"This little publication was made for a particular child, but the public is welcome to the use of it. It was found that amidst the multitude of books

professedly written for children, there is not one adapted to the comprehension of a child from two to three years old. A grave remark, or a connected story, however simple, is above his capacity, and nonsense is always below it; for folly is worse than ignorance. Another great defect is, the want of *good paper*, a *clear and large type*, and *large spaces*. Those only who have actually taught young children can be sensible how necessary these assistances are. The eye of a child and of a learner cannot catch, as ours can, a small obscure ill-formed word, amidst a number of others all equally unknown to him. To supply these deficiencies is the object of this book. The task is humble, but not mean; for to lay the first stone of a noble building, and to plant the first idea in a human mind, can be no dishonour to any hand."

Palgrave, 1778.

'Tis well I got a letter from Warrington when I did;—very well indeed; for I began to be in such a fury, and should have penned you such a chiding! Do you know, pray, how long it is since I heard from any of you? But as I do sometimes offend myself, I think I will forgive you, especially as I wonder how you find time even to read, with labours so multifarious (as Johnson says) going forward. The fate of Miss B.'s letter is

very remarkable. It was written as full,—I am sorry to mortify you, my dear sister,—as the paper would hold, folded, sealed, directed, and put *somewhere;* but when I had finished mine, and wanted it to put in the frank, it could be found *nowhere.* 'Tis needless to tell you how the paper-case was cleared, the cupboard routed out, pockets searched, and every body who had entered the room squinted at with an evil eye of suspicion. The letter has never made its appearance to this day; and what vexes Miss B. is, that Patty can but be in her debt, and that she was before. Now half this letter she says was about Charles, which may serve to excuse me, who finished in a violent hurry. I left him to the last, but was obliged to conclude abruptly. I am afraid to tell you much about him, lest you should fall in love with him again, and send somebody to kidnap him; though I think Charles would have a good many defenders in this house if you did. You will see by the inclosed I have been employing my pen again for him, and again I must employ you to get it printed.

Palgrave, Jan. 20th, 1779.

You are a pretty fellow to grumble, as my mother says you do, at my not writing! Do not you remember when you sent a sheet of Charles's book, you said you did not mean the line you sent with

it for a letter, but would write soon; so that by your own confession you are now in debt to me. Charles bore a part in our examination, by repeating a copy of verses on the boy who would not say A lest he should be made to say B: and we, let me tell you, deserve great praise for our modesty and self-denial, in not making a parade with his Greek, for he *could* have repeated an ode of Anacreon. But notwithstanding this erudition, a few English books will still be very acceptable.

We are just returned from Norwich, where we have been so much engaged with dinners and suppers, that though I fully intended to write from thence, and began a letter, I really could not finish it. The heads of all the Norwich people are in a whirl, occasioned by the routs which have been introduced amongst them this winter; and such a bustle with writing cards a month beforehand, throwing down partitions, moving beds, &c. Do you know the different terms? There is a squeeze, a fuss, a drum, a rout; and lastly, a hurricane, when the whole house is full from top to bottom. It is matter of great triumph to me that we enjoy the latter for ten months in the year.

London, Jan. 2d, 1784.

WELL, my dear brother, here we are in this busy town, nothing in which (the sight of friends excepted) has given us so much pleasure as the

balloon which is now exhibiting in the Pantheon. It is sixteen feet one way, and seventeen another; and when full (which it is not at present) will carry eighty-six pounds. When set loose from the weight which keeps it to the ground, it mounts to the top of that magnificent dome with such an easy motion as put me in mind of Milton's line, "rose like an exhalation." We hope to see it rise in the open air before we leave town. Next to the balloon, Miss B. is the object of public curiosity: I had the pleasure of meeting her yesterday. She is a very unaffected, modest, sweet and pleasing young lady:—but you, now I think of it, are a Goth, and have not read Cecilia. Read, read it, for shame! I begin to be giddy with the whirl of London, and to feel my spirits flag. There are so many drawbacks, from hair-dressers, bad weather and fatigue, that it requires strong health greatly to enjoy being abroad. The enthusiasm for Mrs. Siddons seems something abated this winter. As the last season was spent in unbounded admiration, this, I suppose, will be employed in canvassing her faults, and the third settle her in her proper degree of reputation.

My dear Brother, Palgrave, Jan. 21, 1784.

We arrived at Palgrave yesterday. I much wished to have written again from London; but I could

not get further than half a letter, which was therefore committed to the flames. Bating the circumstance of being greatly hurried, we spent our time very pleasantly in London, and had a great deal of most agreeable society. Our evenings, particularly at Johnson's, were so truly social and lively, that we protracted them sometimes till..... But I am not telling tales. Ask —— at what time we used to separate. Our time, indeed, in London was chiefly spent in seeing people: for as to seeing sights, constant visiting and the very bad weather left us little opportunity for any thing of that kind. There is a curious automaton which plays at chess. His countenance, they say, is very grave and full of thought, and you can hardly help imagining he meditates upon every move. He is wound up, however, at every two or three moves. The same man has made another figure, which speaks: but as his native tongue is French, he stays at home at present to learn English. The voice is like that of a young child.

We spent two very agreeable days at Mr.——'s. We saw there many Americans, members of the congress, and plenipos. We were often amused with the different sentiments of the several parties in which we passed the day. At Mr. Brand Hollis's the nation was ruined; notwithstanding which we ate our turkey and drank our wine as if nothing had happened. In the evening party there was

nobody to be pitied but the poor king: and we criticised none but Mrs. Siddons. It is impossible, however, not to be kept awake by curiosity at learning the extraordinary manœuvres and rapid changes that have happened lately. Do you know that at two o'clock on the day the Parliament met, Mr. Pitt had not received his return; so that Mr. Fox had almost begun the debates before Pitt knew he was even a member!

Palgrave, May 1784.

Let me begin with telling you, what you have some reason to complain of me for not having told you before, that we are very well. Mr. B. has begun to eat his dinners; and we smile upon the year, as the year begins to smile upon us. We propose going to Birmingham this vacation, and we understand Oxford and Daventry are in the way; so that we hope a great deal lies before us to please the eye and touch the soul of friendship: but busy must we be before we have earned our vacation.

What do you think of the behaviour of our great ladies on the present election? I thought the newspapers had exaggerated: but Mr. —— says he himself saw the two Lady ——'s and Miss ——'s go into a low alehouse to canvass, where they staid half an hour; and then, with the mob at

their heels offering them a thousand indignities, proceeded to another. These he mentioned as unmarried ladies, and therefore less privileged. The Duchess of ——, Mrs. ——, and many others, equally expose their charms for the good of the public.

Have you got Hoole's Ariosto? We are reading it; but think the translation, except in a few passages, wonderfully flat and prosaic: the adventures are entertaining, however.

Dover, Sept. 17, 1785, 8 o'clock.

Fair stood the wind for France—
When we our sails advance;
Nor now to trust our chance
Longer would tarry....

It is not very fair neither, for there is scarcely wind enough; but what there is, is in our favour. We are just got here, and a packet sails to-night, so I suppose we shall go in a few hours; for the night is the most beautiful, the most brilliant, that ever rivaled day. The moon, which is nearly full, illuminates the majestic chalky cliffs, the stately Castle, and the element we are going to trust ourselves to. The views about Dover are very bold and very beautiful.—But let me give a regular account of ourselves. From London we

had the good fortune to take part of a chaise to Dover with Dr. Osborn. He is a most entertaining, agreeable companion; and we never had a more agreeable journey, especially to-day, for yesterday it was rainy, and we did not get into Rochester till nine at night; consequently lost in a great measure the windings of the silver Medway. But to-day was uniformly fine; and greatly delighted we were with the view of Chatham, Stroud, and Rochester, from a hill just above the town, which we walked up. The Medway makes a fine bend here. The hop-pickers were at work as we went along, but not with their usual alacrity; for the late storm has blasted them to such a degree, that twenty thousand pounds worth of damage, they say, is done. The country is beautifully variegated all the way, and has many fine seats; among which Sir Horace Man's was pointed out. From this rich inclosed country you come to the open downs, more grand and striking. The first view of Dover castle is noble; and still more finished that of the town, which we saw from Dr. O.'s house where we dined. It has the castle on one side, hills on the other, a valley between (in which is the town), and the sea beyond. I think we shall hardly see more beautiful scenes in France. We here took leave of our last English friends.—I forgot to say we took a hasty peep at the venerable cathedral of Canterbury, to which

I would at any time willingly go a pilgrimage—though not barefoot.

DEAR BROTHER, Besançon, Oct. 9th, 1785.

I WROTE letters from Calais and from Troyes, the contents of which have, I hope, been communicated to you. From Troyes we proceeded to Dijon by a road so delightful that I strongly wished my sister and you could have been with me,—a wish which I cannot help forming, though a vain one, whenever any object particularly pleasant presents itself. During the greatest part of this road we had the full view of the Seine, which we traced upwards to within half a league of its source, and saw it grow less and less, untwisting, as it were, to a single thread. The valley in which it ran was narrow, of a beautiful verdure, and bounded by hills of the most gentle ascent covered with trees or herbage: cattle of all sorts, among which were several flocks of goats, were feeding in sight. The road often ran upon the ascent; and we saw the river, sometimes bordered with trees and sometimes fringed with grass or rushes, winding beneath in the most sportive meanders,—for we saw and lost it nine times from one spot. The scene was in general solitary; but if we came to a spot particularly pleasant, it was sure to be marked by a convent, the neatness of

which, (generally white,) added to the beauty of the scene. After we had lost the Seine, we came to the Val de Suson, a still more romantic place, and very like Middleton Dale, only that the rocks were richly covered with trees. Through the first part of this valley runs the river Suson; the rest is still narrower, and between high rocks.

At Dijon we delivered our first letter of recommendation, which introduced us to M. de Morveau, a man of great merit, who was *avocat-général*, but has quitted his profession for the sake of applying himself to philosophical studies, and chiefly chemical. He writes all the chemical articles in the New Encyclopedie. He esteems Dr. Priestley, Dr. Black, and Mr. Kirwan, to be the chief men in England in the philosophical way. M. de Morveau was one of the first who ascended in a balloon. He showed us their Academy, which is one of the first provincial ones. The *Palais des Etats* in Dijon is the finest building in it; the front of it forms one side of a very handsome square, and the wings extend much beyond it. It is adorned with statues and paintings by the pupils of the drawing-school. From the tower, on which is an observatory belonging to this building, is a charming view of the country: the hills of Burgundy covered with vines; the rivers of Ouche and Suson, which encircle the town; and the town itself, which is large though

not very populous. In our way from Dijon to Dole we saw more of the vintage than we had hitherto done,—and a gay scene it is; though I must confess my disappointment at the first sight of the vines,—which are very low, and nothing like so beautiful as our apple-trees. They say they have more wine this year than they can possibly find vessels to put it in; and yet the road was covered with teams of casks, empty or full, according as they were going out or returning, and drawn by oxen whose strong necks seemed to be bowed unwillingly under the yoke. Men, women and children were abroad: some cutting with a short sickle the bunches of grapes; some breaking them with a wooden instrument; some carrying them on their backs from the gatherers to those who pressed the juice; and, as in our harvest, the gleaners followed. From Dole we should have gone directly to Besançon, but were induced to strike out of the road to visit the *grottes stalactites* of Auxcelles, to see which we crossed in a ferry the river Doux, a fine stream with banks beautifully wooded, and got into a place most wild and solitary, through such terrible bad roads that what we thought would have been the affair of a few hours detained us there the whole night: the grotto, however, repaid our trouble. Had you been there, you would have seen it with a more philosophical eye, and have told us how the con-

tinual dropping of waters through those rocks forms those beautiful petrifications, which when polished, as they sometimes are, have the lustre and transparency of crystal. But it required only eyes to be struck with the view of a vast subterranean running through a whole rock, which had the appearance of a most magnificent Gothic church;—tombs, images, drapery, pillars, shrines, all formed without much aid from fancy, by nature working alone for ages in these long and lofty caverns. We walked in it, I believe, about two furlongs, and it might be another to the end. Besançon is by far the best town we have seen; the streets are long and regular, the hotels of the chief inhabitants palaces for princes, and the public buildings noble. But you would have been most struck with the hospital, managed in all the internal part by those good nuns *Les Hospitalieres*, with such perfect neatness, that in a long chamber containing thirty-five beds, most of them full, there was not any closeness or smell to be perceived. The beds were of white cotton, and by each bed a table and chair. Some of the nuns were attending here; others in the dispensary making up medicines; others in the kitchen making broths, &c.: and all this they do without salary, and many of them are of good families.

Noyon, Oct. 13th.—I could not finish my letter time enough to send it from Besançon, which

gives me an opportunity to tell you in brief that we are got to within a stage of Geneva, and are now sitting in a room which overlooks the delightful lake. We were too late last night for Geneva, as they shut the gates at half-after-six, and open them for no one. We hope to get there this morning, and to receive letters from you, which my heart longs for. I have only to tell you further, that I have seen the Alps,—a sight so majestic, so totally different from any thing I had seen before, that I am ready to sing *Nunc dimittis*.

Tell me in your next how long you have been sitting by a coal fire. We have had no fire, but twice or three times a little in the evening, since we set out; and in the middle of the day the heat has been very strong. I suppose, however, we shall find it colder at Geneva.

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And so much in French; which, though it begins to be easier to me, is still to me either in writing or speaking like using the left hand; and I now want the language the most familiar to me, the most expressive, that with less injustice to my feelings I may thank you for your charming letter. It is not necessary for *you* to travel in order to write good verses; and indeed, to say truth, in the actual journey many things occur not alto-

gether so consonant with the fine ideas one would wish to keep upon one's mind. The dirt and bustle of inns, and the various circumstances, odd or disgusting, of a French *diligence*, are not made to shine in poetry. I shall, however, keep your exhortation in mind; and when, to complete the inspiration, I have drunk of the fountain of Vaucluse, which we are going to do, if the Muse is not favourable, you may fairly conclude I no longer possess her good graces. From Lyons we took the *diligence d'eau* down the Rhone to this place, a voyage which in summer, and in a vehicle more neat and convenient, would have been delightful. But we had incessant rain for two of the days; and the third, though bright, was very cold, with a great deal of wind; so that we did not reach Avignon till the morning of the fourth day. The Rhone is rapid all the way; but at Pont St. Esprit particularly so, insomuch that many passengers get out there: we did not. The Rhone has high banks all the way, or rather is inclosed between hills, covered in many places with vines and pasturage, in others pretty barren. Near St. Esprit begins the olive country. This was the first time we had been in a public voiture; it is a very reputable one, and yet you cannot conceive the shabbiness and *mal propreté* of the boat.

We are now in a land of vermicelli, soup, and macaroni,—a land of onions and garlic,—a land flowing with oil and wine. Avignon is delightfully situated; the Rhone forms two branches here, and incloses a large fertile island. The Durance (another fine river, at present so overflowed that it is not passable,) joins the Rhone some way below the town. The churches here are numerous, highly adorned, and have several good paintings. The streets are darkened with cowls and filled with beggars; drawn here, they say, by the strangers,—for the people are no ways oppressed by the government, the revenue to the pope hardly paying the expenses. We are not yet, however, in the climate of perpetual spring; —like an enchanted island, it seems to fly from us. All along the course of the Rhone there are cold winds. Lyons is disagreeable in winter, both with fogs and cold. At Geneva every body had fires and winter dresses before we left it; and Avignon, though much warmer, is not enough so to invite us much abroad, or permit us to dispense with fires. To-morrow we set off for Orange, and from thence shall go to Lisle, perhaps to Marseilles; but where we shall spend these next two months we have not yet determined. May you and my dear sister spend them with health and pleasure in that dear society where our hearts

perpetually carry us, and to which we hope to return with increased affection!

I forgot to tell you that all the people speak *patois* to one another, though they speak French too; and when we landed, the people who came about us to carry our things had absolutely the air of demoniacs, with their violent gestures and eager looks, and their coarsest exclamations at every second word.

Marseilles, Dec. 1785.

HEALTH to you all—poor mortals as you are, crowding round your coal fires, shivering in your nicely closed apartments, and listening with shivering hearts to the wind and snow which beat dark December! The months here have indeed the same names, but far different are their aspects; for here I am sitting without a fire, the windows open, and breathing an air as perfectly soft and balmy as in our warmest days of May; yet the sun does not shine. On the day we arrived here, the 5th of December, it did; and with as much splendour and warmth, and the sky was as clear and of as bright a blue, as in our finest summer days. The fields are full of lavender, thyme, mint, rosemary, &c.; the young corn is above half a foot high: they have not much in-

deed in this neighbourhood, but from Orange to Lisle we saw a good deal. The trees which are not evergreens have mostly lost their leaves; but one sees every where the pale verdure of the olives mixed with here and there a grove, or perhaps a single tree, of cypress, shooting up its graceful spire of a deeper and more lively green far above the heads of its humbler but more profitable neighbours. The markets abound with fresh and dried grapes, pomegranates, oranges with the green leaves, apples, pears, dried figs, and almonds. They reap the corn here the latter end of May or the beginning of June. The gathering of the olives is not yet finished: it yields to this country its richest harvest. There are likewise a vast number of mulberry-trees, and the road in many places is bordered with them; but they are perfectly naked at present. Marseilles is, however, not without bad weather. The *vent de bise*, they say, is penetrating; and for this last fortnight they have had prodigious rains, with the interruption of only a few days; so that the streets are very dirty and the roads broken up. But they say this is very extraordinary, and that if they pass two days without seeing a bright sun they think Nature is dealing very hardly with them. I will not, however, boast too much over you from these advantages; for I am ready to confess the account may be balanced by many inconveniences,

little and great, which attend this favoured country. And thus I state my account.

Advantages of Travelling.	*Per Contra.*
A July sun and a southern breeze.	Flies, fleas, and all Pharaoh's plague of vermin.
Figs, almonds, &c. &c.	No tea, and the very name of a tea-kettle unknown.
Sweet scents in the fields.	Bad scents within doors.
Grapes and raisins.	No plum-pudding.
Coffee as cheap as milk.	Milk as dear as coffee.
Wine a demi-sous the bottle.	Bread three sous the halfpenny roll.
Provençal songs and laughter.	Provençal roughness and scolding.
Soup, salad and oil.	No beef, no butter.
Arcs of triumph, fine churches, stately palaces.	Dirty inns, heavy roads, uneasy carriages.
A pleasant and varied country.	But many, many a league from those we love.

From Avignon (whence I wrote to you last) we went to Orange, where we were gratified with the sight of an arc of triumph entire, of rich architecture; and though the delicacy of the sculpture is much defaced by time, it is easy to see what it must have been when fresh. There is likewise a noble ruin of an amphitheatre built against a rock, of which you may trace the whole extent, though the area is filled with cottages. These were the first remains of antiquity of any consequence I had seen, and they impressed me with an idea of Roman grandeur. range is a poor town, but

the country is green and pleasant, and they have all country houses. When the principality came under French government, it was promised that they should have no fresh taxes imposed; but *peu à peu*, say they, taxes are come. They had salt springs which more than supplied them with that article;—they are forbidden to work them. They grew tobacco;—now, if any one has more than three plants in his garden, he is punished. From Orange we went to Lisle. In the way we stopped at Carpentras, where we were shown another arc of triumph, over which a cardinal, the bishop of Carpentras, built his kitchen; very wisely judging that nothing was more worthy to enter through an arc of triumph, than a noble haunch of venison or an exquisite ragoo. Lisle is a small town, very pleasant in summer, because it is surrounded with water; and still more noted for its neighbourhood to the source of that water, the celebrated fountain of Vaucluse.

During the few fair days we have had, the warmth and power of the sun has been equal to our summer days: it is truly delightful to feel such a sun in December; to be able to saunter by the shore of the Mediterranean, or sit on the bank and enjoy the prospect of an extensive open sea, smooth and calm as a large lake. It is likewise very pleasant to gain an hour more of daylight upon these short days. However, though

the middle of the day is so warm, in the mornings and evenings a fire is acceptable, I must confess.

The Marseillians value themselves upon being a kind of republic, and their port is free: the lower rank are bold and rude; the upper, by what I hear, very corrupt in their manners. There are 30,000 Protestants: their place of worship is a country house, which they have hired of the commandant himself. They meet with no molestation, and hope from the temper of the times that they shall ere long have leave to build a church. The minister is an agreeable and literary man, and is very obliging towards us; his wife has been six years in England, and speaks English well. Her family fled there from persecution; for her grandfather (who was a minister) was seized as he came out from a church where he had been officiating, by the soldiers. His son, who had fled along with the crowd and gained an eminence at some distance, seeing they had laid hold on his father, came and offered himself in his stead; and in his stead was sent to the galleys, where he continued seven years. *L'honnête Criminel* is founded on this fact. Besides this family we have hardly any acquaintance here, nor are like to have. We have, however, been two or three times with the Chanoines de St. Victor, who are all of the best families of France, as they must prove their nobility for 150 years. They

are very polite and hospitable, and far enough from bigots; for we were surprised to find how freely to us they censured auricular confession, the celibacy of the clergy, and laughed at some of their legendary miracles. I forgot to say that the country about Marseilles is covered with country-houses; they reckon 10,000. They were first begun to be built on account of the plague: every body has one. There is a fine picture of the terrible plague here at the *Consigne* and another at the Town-house. They are very exact at present in their precautions. I am sure the plague cannot be occasioned merely by want of cleanliness, for then Marseilles could not escape.

Remember that we are longing for letters, and that news from you will be more grateful to us than groves of oranges or Provençal skies.

Aix, Feb. 9, 1786.

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With regard to ourselves, we have at length quitted Marseilles; where, to confess the truth, we stayed long enough to be pretty well tired of it; for we had scarce any acquaintance, and no amusements (the Play excepted) but what we could procure to ourselves by reading or walking. Some delightful walks we did take under a bright sun and a clear blue sky, which would have done honour to the fairest months in the English ca-

lendar. We sailed one fine day to the little chateau *d'If*, a league from the port. It is used as a prison for extravagant or disorderly young men, whom their parents get shut up here—sometimes to avoid the disgrace of a more public punishment. We had a great pleasure at Marseilles in seeing your friend Mr. Howard: he was well, and in good spirits. He went by the name of the English Doctor, and as such has prescribed, he told us, with tolerable success. If you have a mind to strike a good stroke in London, introduce magnetism; 'tis in France the folly of the day. There is a society at Marseilles for that purpose composed of gentlemen. They boast they can lay asleep when they please, and for as long as they please; and that during this sleep or trance the mind can see the operations going forward in the corporeal machine, and predict future events. One of them offered to try his skill on Mr. Barbauld; but after a long and unpleasant operation of rubbing the temples and forehead, he was obliged to desist without success. Mr. Howard will tell you, however, they operate better at Lyons, as he saw several women at the hospital put to sleep in a minute by only passing the hand over their forehead.

At Marseilles we again bought a carriage (an English chaise), in which we hope to perform the rest of our journey,—at least to Paris. The road

from Marseilles to Toulon is over mountains which, though not very high, are the beginning of the Alps. They are in many parts quite naked and craggy; in others covered with forests of pines; and in many they have had the industry to make terraces one over another to the very top; on which they have planted vines, though the culture must demand prodigious labour, for they must bring all the earth. The almond-trees, which are now in full flower, scattered here and there, embellish the scene. At Toulon we saw the arsenal, which contains the *corderie*, the *salle d'armes*, the naval stores, &c. There is something horrible in the clanking of the chains of the galley-slaves, who are chained two-and-two, and employed in various works within the place. Three or four galleys lie in the harbour, but they are not used except for lodging the *forçats*. From Toulon we went to Hieres;—and how think you did we go? On foot every step of the way, and it is nine miles at least. We went on foot because the roads are still so bad we dared not venture in a carriage. Hieres is a specimen of the Italian climate and Italian productions: to the south it is open to the sea; every other quarter is fenced with hills. The town lies on the descent of a hill, and is surrounded with groves of orange and lemon trees, glowing in the brightest beauty, and with all the variety of colour, from the palest lemon

to the deep and almost blood-red species of orange. The leaves, of a vivid green, give a relief to the fruit, which is in so great an abundance that I have hardly seen apple-trees so full. It is a delicious spot, quite the gardens of the Hesperides, and enjoys a constant verdure. The hedges are composed of myrtle, holm-oak, and lentisk, of the ashes of which latter they make a lye with which they preserve their raisins. They gather green peas soon after Christmas: every month brings its peculiar harvest. Besides the corn, wine and oil, which they share in common with their neighbours, they have vast-quantities of strawberries, peaches, kidney-beans, all kinds of fruit and garden stuff. Sweet waters and essences are distilled from the orange flowers, and the peel of the bergamot, the cedrat, and some other kinds valuable for their fragrance. Some of the orange gardens are worth from twenty to twenty-six thousand livres a year. From an opposite hill there is a view of the town; above it a convent of Bernardines, and higher still the ruined walls and castle of the old town;—the whole surrounded with a bright circle of green and gold, and houses of a shining white in the midst of the orange gardens; further the paler green of the olives; to the south the sea, and the fishery salt-works; and opposite, the islands of Hieres, where is plenty of game. Winter is seen peeping at this little paradise from

the top of a distant mountain covered with snow; and sometimes, indeed, he sends a hoar frost—after which the oranges drop by hundreds from the trees.

To complete our expedition and vary the mode of travelling, we returned as follows: I upon the *bourique* of a *paisanne*, between two loaded panniers, Mr. B. walking before; and the woman, a stout, sunburnt, cheerful Provençal, by the side of the ass, driving, guiding, and hallooing it onward. Bread and figs, which we put in the pannier and ate as we went along, were our breakfast. I rode thus two leagues, and walked with Mr. B. the third. And now, having touched the utmost limit of our long tour, it is with inexpressible pleasure we reflect that every step we shall for the future take will bring us nearer again to those dear friends in whose society we hope to spend the rest of our life. We propose returning by Nismes, Montpelier, and Bourdeaux. Aix is a clean pretty town: the baths and the fountains of hot water are worth seeing. It is full of clergy and men of the law. We got acquainted with two gentlemen (an officer and an ecclesiastic) who were very civil to us; but we could not help being diverted with the eagerness with which they recited their own verses (for they were both versifiers), their gestures, their compliments to each other, and their total freedom from that awkward bashfulness which hangs on us English when we have written

something clever that we long to bring into notice, and do not know how to bring it about.

Thoulouse, Feb. 27, 1786.

I BEGIN this letter from Thoulouse, though I shall probably not finish it before we get to Bourdeaux.—We got here last night, and hoped to have walked about the town to-day, where they say there is a good deal to be seen; but we are confined to our room by a pretty heavy fall of snow, which has continued the whole day. We are at present convinced that it is a vain expectation to escape from winter by going to these southern climates—at Bengal I suppose it may be done: but the southern provinces of France differ more in the duration than in the degree of their winter; and beyond all doubt they have more sudden and violent *changes* of weather than we have. In consequence they dress warmer than we do. The pelisse, the muff, the fur gloves and shoes, the hussar cloak and flannel linings, are all common here, and found necessary. Yet it is also true that through a great part of the winter they enjoy the most delicious weather; and that, with regard to one or other of their productions, there is not any time of the year in which you do not meet with harvest or blossoms; for before the gathering of

olives is over, the almond-tree is in flower. Till within these four days we have had fine weather for a long time; and Lower Languedoc, through which our route has lain since we crossed the Rhone, has worn all the lovely features of spring. At Pezenas (the last place where we made any stay) the peach, apricot, and bean were beginning to blossom; the gardens were all green with various vegetables, the fields with corn, and a few trees were even in leaf. But their springs are apt to be premature. Here (in Upper Languedoc) it is colder.

Gratified as we have been by the spring of Nature, we have been no less so by the hoary ruins of Antiquity. The vast cirque of the amphitheatre at Nismes fills the mind with an amazing idea of Roman greatness. It is defaced by a number of buildings in the area; which, however, are to be demolished, and the venerable ruin kept in better repair. To *repair* a ruin carries a better sound with it than to *build* a ruin, as we do in England. *La Maison Carrée* is a *bijou;* it has all that the utmost delicacy and richness of architecture can give. But we prefer to them both the Pont du Gard.

Nismes is the very centre of the Protestants. They are computed to be 30,000, and the richest part of the inhabitants: for here, as the Dissenters in England, they give themselves to trade:

They have no church, nor even barn; but assemble in the *desert*, as they call it, in the open air, in a place surrounded by rocks which reverberate the voice. The pulpit is moveable, and there are a few seats of stone for the elders. On their great festivals, they say, the sight is very striking.

I wish you, who have a quarrel to some of our English axioms of taste in gardening, could see the public walks of Nismes and Montpelier; both, (especially the latter) laid out with great magnificence, but quite in the old style of terraces, fountains, straight alleys, and exact symmetry: but the whole is great, and was to me very new. We intended to have taken the canal at Beziers, but the bad weather prevented us. From Narbonne till near Thoulouse we had on our left a long chain of mountains, the Pyrenees. I love to see those everlasting boundaries of nations. We had not, however, any wish to cross them and try the Spanish accommodations—there are difficulties enow of that kind in France. This is the height of the Carnival, and we have seen as we came along, the dance on the green, and the masque by torchlight; but in general I am afraid there is a good deal of coarseness in the mirth of the vulgar, and of licentiousness in the gaiety of the rich. From Narbonne to Thoulouse there are a great many *chateaus*, pompous buildings with towers, but no ornamented grounds about them as in England,

nor any thing in the avenues, hedges, &c. that has a look of neatness. I fancy the rats hold a glorious *sabat* in some of them.—I should tell you that at Montpelier we saw the anatomical theatre, where they have two hundred students, who shave and dress hair to pay their board and lodging, and attend dissections and study surgery with great application the rest of their time: and they say they make better progress than those that have money. I am sorry I cannot send you a slip of Rabelais' scarlet gown, with which sacred relique the students are invested when they take their degrees. The meaning of which I take to be this,—that laughing may cure you when physic would miss.

The situation of Thoulouse seems calculated for trade, as the noble canal of Languedoc meets there the still more noble river of the Garonne: yet it is not commercial, as the great ambition of all the rich inhabitants is directed towards gaining a seat in parliament, which ennobles them; and then they leave trade. You may guess with what feelings we saw the seat of that parliament which condemned Calas. The spirit of the times, however, thank Heaven! is greatly altered.

Bourdeaux, March 3.—We are arrived here today. The road from Thoulouse to this town is remarkably pleasant. It lies mostly along the banks of the Garonne, and several fine rivers which fall

into it; the Tarne, the Aveyron, &c. On the other side is a ridge of hilly ground quite sandy, covered with vines, which indeed have a most desolate appearance at this time of the year; but fancy can spread the foliage and hang the purple clusters. On the river-side are fine rich valleys covered with corn, and here and there pasture ground:—no more olives, but groves of oak; no more almond-blossoms, but hedges of hawthorn. On Shrove Tuesday (which was a remarkably fine day) every town and every village was poured out upon the road, all dressed, and dancing each lad with his lass. What I should not have supposed, they dance too on Ash Wednesday; for though the churches were pretty full in the morning of dismal-looking figures in black hoods, who came to confess the sins of the Carnival, the greater part put the English interpretation upon a holy day; and considered it as a holiday. Though we have not yet seen much of Bourdeaux, a walk this afternoon has convinced us it is a more magnificent town than any we have yet seen in France. It happens too to be the fair.

.....THE road from Tours to Orleans on the winding banks of the Loire is delightfully pleasant; but we had not fine weather enough to enjoy

all its beauty; for we have had the second winter you speak of, in all its severity of snow and frost. We were particularly pleased, however, with Tours. It has one street of more complete beauty than any *street* I have yet seen, terminated at one end by a fine bridge over the Loire, at the other by one of the noblest malls in the kingdom. Blois is delightful from its situation, and interesting from the events which have taken place within its now deserted walls. Orleans is entirely a town of commerce; and it seems to flourish, for they live remarkably well there. Trade may have been despised formerly in France; but I am sure it cannot now there are such towns as Lyons, Bourdeaux, and Orleans, where it displays its effects in all the pride of opulence. We have been now a month in Paris, and here the objects of curiosity crowd upon us. In the provinces they are scattered here and there; but in the capital,—palaces, pictures, statues, public gardens, meet you at every step, and all the powers of observation and organs of perception are agreeably filled. The societies of Paris do not obtrude themselves in like manner on your notice; on the contrary, it is pretty difficult to get sufficiently into them to judge of their complexion and character. We shall have been, however, in a few of them, and shall have seen many agreeable individuals. English is very much studied here at present: there are a great many

who read, and some who talk it. Every thing of English fabric and workmanship is preferred here, and not without reason. They have an idea here very contrary to ours; for they say The English invent, and the French bring to perfection. They are going to inclose all Paris and its suburbs by an immense wall: it puts one in mind of hedging in the cuckoo; but it is to prevent smuggling. We have had the good fortune to get very clean lodgings: they are near the Pont Royal and the Tuilleries, both which we often cross, and never without fresh admiration at the number of beautiful buildings and gay objects. I like the gardens of the Tuilleries better than our St. James's Park; for though they are somewhat disgraced by the old-fashioned parterre, yet on the whole they are more gay, more lively: the view from the terrace commands a greater variety of objects; the Tuilleries is more adorned; and the various groups of all ranks,—some taking lemonade, some sitting on the grass, some even reading,—give an air of ease and enjoyment more than is to be seen in our Park. This is rather an unfortunate time for seeing paintings, as the king's pictures are all taken down in order to be arranged and put up in the gallery of the Louvre, which is preparing for their reception: and when that fine building is filled with so noble a collection, it will have few things in Europe superior.

One great advantage which Paris has as a town over London is its *quais*, by which means they enjoy their river and the fine buildings upon it. As to the streets, most of them are certainly narrow, but not absolutely impracticable to the poor *piéton*, as I had been taught to believe; for when not dressed I walk about a good deal. They say, however, a great many accidents happen, which their boasted police takes more care to stifle than to prevent: if a man is run over by a coach, they dare not put it in any public papers. The streets are full of little cabriolets, which drive very fast: they are forbidden, but people have them notwithstanding. We have been at two of their Academies, that of *Sciences*, and that of *Belles-lettres*. Several *éloges* were read, well drawn up; prizes proposed, &c. They clap hands as at the playhouse when a sentiment or expression pleases them. The theatre sinks in France as well as England; for as Mrs. Siddons stands alone, we may well say it sinks. They are building a very fine church, St. Geneviève; and in general there is a good deal of new building as well as in London. We have yet a vast deal to see; but we shall see it as fast as we can, that we may return to those friends who will be only dearer to us from absence.

Paris, June 7, 1786.

..... THE affair of Cardinal Rohan, which has so much engrossed the talk at Paris, is at length decided: but we have not been able to see without indignation the decisions of the Parliament altered in almost every instance by the pleasure of the king; so that judicial proceedings are mere child's play in this country. A grocer has got himself into the Bastille by writing a pamphlet on this occasion; in which he insinuates that the queen herself was in the plot, and that Madame Oliva was the cloud by means of which she played the fable of Ixion on the poor Cardinal. In short, people's conjectures are as much afloat since the decision as before. The king of Prussia is reported to have said, "Qu'il falloit que le Cardinal montrat beaucoup d'esprit pour prouver qu'il n'avoit été que bête." Among the long list of titles which figure at the head of his *Memoire*, that of *Academicien* is not found: the reason, they say, is, that his *avocat*, at the request of the Academy, (who feared they might be disgraced by the fellow-ship of such an associate,) persuaded him to leave it out, by telling him that, for the other titles, they implied no parts; but that of *Academicien*—supposing a man of superior genius and knowledge—might hurt him in his trial, as his only

defence must rest on his proving himself *un imbecille.*—And so much for the Cardinal.

We were the other day at the Museum, a place lately set up, intended as a repository for works of art; likewise as a centre of communication with the learned in any part of Europe, who, by corresponding with M. de la Blancherie, may have their discoveries published or their questions answered if possible to answer them: nay, I believe I need not have put in that restriction, for a Frenchman is never at a loss to answer any question. The plan seems good: but I was greatly diverted with the following question, published in one of their weekly papers; "Whether the societies called Clubs in England, and now imitated in Paris, might not tend to render their members morose and *taciturnes;* since by the laws of such meetings only one person must speak at a time, and that only for a certain number of minutes?" An author may read his piece at this Museum; but as the doors are not locked, it may chance that the company slip away one by one and leave him alone, as I suspect might be the case with a young novel-writer whom we in like manner escaped from there the other day. By the way, I have found out the reason why the French have so little poetry: it is because every body makes verses.

We have been at Versailles and St. Cloud: the

latter is now fitting up for the queen. The situation is far more delightful than Versailles; but *that*, by force of expense, has a magnificence which no palace I have seen can compare with. We saw it on Whitsunday, when the waters play. The environs of Paris are now very pleasant; and they are very animated, without being, I think, quite so crowded as those of London. They do not make hay here till St. John's day, (the 24th of June,) which I think is later than near London; yet the weather has been very hot.

I was recommended to an English nun; and after going to see her twice, she had the goodness to send a parcel of books to convert me: so you see there is some zeal left in the female convents at least:—as to the priests and monks, I believe they have very little indeed.

MY DEAR BROTHER, London, June 29, 1786.

I AM happy to write to you again from English ground. We set out from Paris on the 17th, but went no further than Chantilly, as we meant to devote the whole of the next day to seeing that noble seat of the prince of Condé, which, both for the house and grounds, is the finest we have seen in France. The stables, which hold three hundred horses, are a most beautiful piece of architecture. There is a noble museum and ar-

mory in the palace; a fine piece of artificial water in the gardens, which are laid out partly in the English, partly in the French style, and in the best taste of both; a dairy floored and lined with marble, and in which all the utensils are of marble or fine porcelain; a *menagerie;* an *orangerie,* all the plants of which (some hundreds) being set out and in full blossom, diffused the richest perfume I ever was regaled with. *L'isle d'Amour* is one of the prettiest parts of the garden, abounding with alleys and walks, some close, others gay and airy, formed by light lattice-work covered with privet and adorned with the greatest profusion of honeysuckles and roses. In the centre of the island is a statue of a Cupid without wings or quiver, holding a heart with these lines:

" N'offrant qu'un cœur à la beauté,
Aussi nud que la vérité,
Sans armes comme l'innocence,
Sans ailes comme la constance,
Tel fut l'Amour au siècle d'or;
On ne le trouve plus, mais on le cherche encore."

The temple of Venus is a large saloon, in which are fountains continually throwing up water, which falls again into agate vases; leaning over which are Cupids of marble. The whole room is painted, and breathes a coolness and gaiety quite enchanting. As we were walking in these gardens we had the pleasure of seeing a balloon fly over our

heads: it was in full sail for England with M. Tetu, who had set off from Paris that morning. However, with our humbler mode of travelling we got to Dover first: for the lightning caught the car; and though the aërial traveller received no damage from it, he was obliged to lie by to refit his balloon, which descended not far from Boulogne. From Boulogne we took our passage. We had intended to have gone on to Calais, but it was four posts more; and besides, we were told that the passage from Boulogne, though longer, was generally performed in less time, and was now preferred; which we found to be true: we were obliged indeed to wait a day for a vessel, but we got over in less than four hours. And not without a pleasing emotion did we view again the green swelling hills covered with large sheep, and the winding road bordered with the hawthorn hedge, and the English vine twisted round the tall poles, and the broad Medway covered with vessels, and at last the gentle yet majestic Thames. Nor did we find these home scenes had lost of their power to strike or charm us by all we had seen abroad.

LETTERS TO MISS E. BELSHAM,

AFTERWARDS

MRS. KENRICK.

London, Feb. 1771.

BELIEVE me, my dear Betsy, my heart has some time reproached me for being in your debt ..... I am much obliged to you for your kind invitation to Bedford: certainly few things would give me more pleasure than conversing with my Betsy; but it will not be in my power to reach Bedford this time. I have already been so long from home, that they begin to be impatient for my return, and I would not trespass too far upon their goodness who, I am sensible, in some measure deny themselves in being without me.

Patty and I are now with Mrs. K. She and I are great walkers, and in fine weather often stroll about almost all the morning; but we have very little to do with visiting any public places except the playhouses, where we have been three or four times. Last night we saw the West Indian, a very pretty play, as we thought on reading it; but the characters are so ill cast, that we had not

half the pleasure in seeing it. One part, indeed, the Irishman, was excellently done, but that was the only one; I think they seem to want actors very much for easy, genteel characters, which are more difficult to support than mimicry or strong-marked passions. The chaste and delicate sensibilities of a young unpractised heart, or the decorums of a virtuous character, must be very difficult to assume; and indeed there are so many qualifications requisite to make a perfect actor, it is almost pity one possessed of them should follow the profession, nor is it surprising there should be but one upon the stage at once..... I admire Mrs. K. beyond most women I know, that engaged as she is by matrimonial connexions she is not engrossed by them, but has a heart as open to every other endearing relation and friendly sentiment as ever. It is not true, what Dr. Fordyce insinuates, that women's friendships are not sincere; I am sure it is not: I remember when I read it I had a good mind to have burnt the book for that unkind passage. I hope the Doctor will give us our revenge, as he has begun his sermons to young men: they were advertised in the papers,—was it not a piece of parade unbecoming a preacher? It would be difficult to determine whether the age is growing better or worse; for I think our plays are growing like sermons, and our sermons like plays.

Warrington, Jan 1772.

I HEARD not long ago a piece of news which pleases me beyond measure: can you guess what it is? Mrs. Lewin tells me that my dear Betsy intends coming to Lancashire soon. I hope these her good intentions will speedily be put in execution; if we had you here, Patty and I should be as happy as the day is long. We have a knot of lasses just after your own heart,—as merry, blithe and gay as you would wish them, and very smart and clever,—two of them are the Miss Rigbys. We have a West Indian family, too, that I think you would like; a young couple who seem intended by nature for nothing but mirth, frolic and gaiety. I say nothing of our young men, as I would not flatter you with the hopes of any conquest, for the foresaid damsels have left no hearts to conquer.

You who love so dearly to puzzle other people, I have a puzzle for you. Can you find a number of words that will take in all the letters of the alphabet and no more? We have all been trying at it, with Mr. Enfield's assistance, a long time; if you can accomplish it we kiss the hem of your garment.

Warrington, Jan. 1, 1773.

NOT in charity with me forsooth! So you would pretend you never received a letter from me a

great while ago, in answer to your last! A letter, madam, written with such purity of style, such admirable brevity and perspicuity, that I am confident there was not a sentence of it you would wish omitted, or that the severest critic would object to. Well, if you will fancy I am still in your debt, I must make haste and get out of it as fast as I can.

We are preparing to celebrate the birthday of —a prince, shall I say? why not? a king if you please, since he has more power than any monarch in the universe, and we all expect blessings from him of more value than the Indies: perhaps, indeed, we may expect too much from him, for it is natural to hope for every thing under the auspices of a new king; and however we may have been disappointed by his predecessors, we fondly flatter ourselves that the young sovereign will crown all our hopes, and put us in possession of all our wishes. Blessings, invaluable ones, he certainly has in his disposal; but if we have wasted the bounties of his predecessors, would it not become us to mingle a tear to their memories with the joy which his accession inspires? May the present reign, however, be happy to you and me, and all of us, long I dare not add, except in good actions, because, young as the prince is, it is no presumption to say that his days are numbered; the astronomers have already cast his nativity,

nor is it in the power of all the sons of Adam to prolong beyond the appointed term, though but for an hour, the life of—the New Year.

Geneva, Oct. 21, 1785.

My dear Eliza has desired me to write to her during our tour. She could not have put me upon an employment more agreeable to myself, for I am continually wishing those I love in England could share the pleasure we receive by the new scenes and objects which are continually passing before our eyes; and though I can give you but a very inadequate idea of them, it will be without any drawback from fatigue, bad inns, dirt, and various other &c's which may be put on the opposite side when the travelling account is balanced. We landed at Calais Sept. 18th, and you may wonder that we have as yet only reached Geneva; but Mr. B. from kind regard to my health, and indeed the convenience of us both, thought it best to make short stages; besides which, we have stopped wherever there were churches or fine things to be seen. One very agreeable ornament of the towns abroad, which in England we are strangers to, is their fountains, the more pleasing as they connect public utility with a degree of magnificence. They excel us

likewise in public walks, and in every fortified town the ramparts alone afford very fine ones.

We find ourselves very happy at Geneva; and if the season was not so far advanced, should like to spend a month or two here: indeed we have been singularly fortunate, for Mr. B. has found out a family of relations here, of the name of Rochemont, very amiable and respectable people; and the society here in general seems easy, sprightly and literary. English is much understood, and very tolerably spoken by many. The town is still divided into parties, and one side will tell you that Geneva is no longer what it was, that it has lost its liberty and every thing worth living for; and thus far is true, that the government is become entirely aristocratical, and is at present so strict, that half a dozen people cannot have a weekly meeting at each other's houses, unless they choose to declare they keep an open tavern. The situation of Geneva, as you well know, is delightful. I am just returned from an excursion to the mountain of Saléve, within a league of the town; from whence on one side you have a view of Geneva, with its lake of the purest blue, a large plain between the chain of Mount Jura and that of the Alps, cultivated like a parterre, and full of villages, country houses and farms, watered by the Arve, which meanders through it in the most sportive manner, making several islands,

and beyond Geneva falls into the Rhone. The vintage is not here got in, so that the vineyards are still in their beauty. On the other side Saléve, the mountains open upon you in all their grandeur. Mr. B. is gone to the Glaciers, to feast his eyes with a nearer view of these stupendous mountains; but I thought the expedition beyond my strength, and I am during his absence in a family of Genevois, who are very good kind of people.

Will you hear how they pass the Sunday at Geneva? They have service at seven in the morning, at nine, and at two; after that they assemble in parties for conversation, cards and dancing, and finish the day at the theatre. Did not you think they had been stricter at Geneva than to have plays on the Sunday, especially as it is but two or three years since they were allowed at all? The service at their churches is seldom much more than an hour, and I believe few people go more than once a day. As soon as the text is named, the minister puts on his hat, in which he is followed by all the congregation, except those whose hats and heads have never any connexion; for you well know that to put his hat upon his head is the last use a well-dressed Frenchman would think of putting it to. At proper periods of the discourse, the minister stops short, and turns his back to you, in order to blow

his nose, which is a signal for all the congregation to do the same; and a glorious concert it is, for the weather is already severe, and people have got colds. I am told, too, that he takes this time to refresh his memory by peeping at his sermon, which lies behind him in the pulpit.

Nobody ought to be too old to improve: I should be sorry if I was; and I flatter myself I have already improved considerably by my travels. First, I can swallow gruel soup, egg soup, and all manner of soups, without making faces much. Secondly, I can pretty well live without tea; they give it, however, at Geneva. Thirdly, I am less and less shocked, and hope in time I shall be quite easy at seeing gentlemen, perhaps perfect strangers, enter my room without ceremony when I am in my bedgown. I would not have you think, however, I am in danger of losing my modesty; for if I am no longer affected at some things, I have learned to blush at others; and I will tell you, as a friend, that I believe there is but one indecency in France, which is, for a man and his wife to have the same sleeping-room. "Est ce votre chambre, madame, ou celle de M. votre époux?" said a lady to me the other day. I protest I felt quite out of countenance to think we had but one.

It is time to leave Geneva, for I see from my window the tops of Mount Jura, which are already covered with snow; and we have had a *vent de bise* so severe, that I have been confined to my

chamber, it is now the sixth day, with a very painful swelled face.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Hampstead, 1800.

WHETHER or no I received the letter which you forgot to write, I shall not tell you; I only know that I am often reproached by my correspondents for negligence; and for the life of me I cannot think of any thing that has hindered the arrival of my letters, except the cause to which you are inclined to attribute the failure of yours. Be that as it may, I most certainly have received from you *one* letter which has given me a great deal of pleasure, and for which I will no longer defer my affectionate thanks. And what shall I tell you first? That we are well, that we have rubbed tolerably through the winter, and that we have been enjoying the sudden burst of spring, which clothed every tree and every hedge in verdure with a rapidity seldom observed in our climate. The blossoms were all pushed out at once, but unfortunately few have remained long enough to give the expectation of fruit. I fear it may be the same with your beautiful apple-orchards. We often picture to ourselves the beautiful country, and still oftener the affectionate friends and the interesting family with whom we spent so happy a fortnight last summer.

If all that has happened had not happened, or the memory of it could be washed away with Lethe, how usefully and respectably might Dr. Priestley now be placed at the head of the Royal Institution, which is so fashionable just now in London! I went a few mornings ago to hear Dr. Garnet, who is at present the only lecturer, and was much pleased to see a fashionable and very attentive audience, about one third ladies, assembled for the purposes of science and improvement. How much is taught now, and even made a part of education, which, when you and I were young, was not even discovered! It does some credit to the taste of the town, that the Institution and the Bishop of London's lectures have been the most fashionable places of resort this winter. I have received, however, great pleasure lately from the representation of De Montfort, a tragedy which you probably read a year and half ago, in a volume entitled A Series of Plays on the Passions. I admired it then, but little dreamed I was indebted for my entertainment to a young lady of Hampstead whom I visited, and who came to Mr. Barbauld's meeting all the while with as innocent a face as if she had never written a line. The play is admirably acted by Mrs. Siddons and Kemble, and is finely written, with great purity of sentiment, beauty of diction, strength and originality of character; but it is open to criticism,—I cannot believe such a ha-

tred natural. The affection between the brother and sister is most beautifully touched, and, as far as I know, quite new. The play is somewhat too good for our present taste.

Stoke Newington, May, 1811.

MY DEAR MRS. KENRICK,

I HAVE been thinking what to liken our uncertain and unfrequent correspondence to. I cannot liken it to the regular blow of flowers that come out and blossom in their proper season. It is rather like the aloe, that after having been barren season after season shows signs of life all on a sudden, and pushes out when you least expect it. But take notice, the life is in the aloe all the while, and sorry indeed should I be if the life was not all the while in our friendship, though it so seldom diffuses itself over a piece of paper. How much I long to see you again! I wish you would come and see me this summer, the journey I should hope would not be too much for you; and in coming to me you would be near all your friends. Do think of it!

.....I believe I am writing you an enormous letter; but I have been in a course of letter-reading. I am wading through the letters of Madame du Deffand, in four volumes. Have you read them? Walpole and she wrote every week, and they were continually grumbling at one an-

other, yet they went on. Walpole, poor man, seems to have been terribly afraid that this old blind lady was in love with him; and he had much ado to reduce her expressions of friendship to something of an English standard. This lady appears to have been very unhappy. She was blind, indeed, but she had every thing else that could make age comfortable; fortune, friends, talents, consideration in the world, the society of all the wits and all the people of rank of Paris, or who visited Paris, but she totally wanted the best support of all,—religious feelings and hopes; and I do not know any thing that is likely to impress their importance more on the mind than the perusal of these letters. You see her tired of life, almost blaspheming providence for having given her existence; yet dreading to die, because she had no hopes beyond death. A lady told me she would not on any account let her daughter read the letters. I think, for my part, they give in this view as good a lesson as you can pick out of Mrs. More's Practical Piety, which, if you have not read, I cannot help it.

Adieu! do let me hear from you soon. I wonder, say you, the woman has the face to ask it. That's true, but I hope you will, notwithstanding. Nothing will give more pleasure to

Your ever affectionate friend.

LETTERS TO MISS DIXON,

AFTERWARDS

MRS. BEECROFT.

Palgrave, March 17th, 1777.

ARACHNE, my dear Miss Dixon,—so goes the story,—was unfortunate enough to incur the mortal displeasure of Minerva by too pompous a display of her skill in embroidery; and since that event, very few ladies who have courted the favour of Minerva have chosen to run the hazard of provoking her by the delicacy of their needle-work. Now, as I do not believe that Arachne or Minerva either (no dispraise to her goddess-ship) ever wrought any thing prettier than the roses you have been so obliging as to send me,—Flora, indeed, promises to produce some very like them in a few months,—I wonder much at your being so great a favourite with the goddess as I find you are by the story which accompanied them, and that she thinks proper to encourage you in handling both your pen and your needle in the manner you do. Indeed, my dear, I was equally surprised

and flattered at the very obliging manner in which you have shown that you remember me; and though much struck with the elegance of your fancy and the skillfulness of your fingers, I am still more delighted with the proof they give me of your regard and affection.

It is generally said, that at your age impressions of friendship are easily made and soon worn out; but it is not so with you; and to say the truth, I should be mortified if it were, for I have myself too lively and pleasing a remembrance of the happy and sportive hours we enjoyed together at Thorpe, not to wish they should be equally dear to your mind. My thoughts, as well as Mr. B.'s, have often pursued you since. We have figured you as amongst your sweet companions, at once improving your heart in sensibility, accomplishing yourself in all that is elegant, and enjoying without fear or anxiety all the simple, innocent, cheerful pleasures which belong to that period of life you are now in. Enjoy and relish them while you may. You will never be again—I do not say so happy, for I hope your happiness will ever increase,—but you will never enjoy again the same kind of happiness which you do now, nor with so little mixture of uneasiness; and the way to prolong it is to keep as late as possible that entire openness, simplicity and ingenuousness which is the beautiful characteristic of your age.

Palgrave, Nov. 11th.

I HAVE long been determined to seize the first moment of leisure to write to my dear Miss Dixon; but leisure is one of those things of which I enjoy the least, so I am at length determined to write without it. By the way, do you know the pedigree and adventures of Leisure?

She was born somewhere amongst the Chaldean shepherds, where she became a favourite of Urania; and having been instructed in her sublime philosophy, taught men to observe the course of the stars, and to mark the slow revolution of seasons. The next we hear of her is in the rural mountains and valleys of Arcadia. In this delightful abode her charms made a conquest of the god Pan, who would often sit whole days by her side, tuning his pipe of unequal reeds. By him she had two beautiful children, Love and Poetry, the darlings of the shepherds, who received them in their arms, and brought them up amidst the murmur of bees, the falls of water, the lowing of cattle, and the various rural and peaceful sounds with which that region abounded. When the Romans spread the din of arms over the globe, Leisure was frightened from her soft retreats, and from the cold Scythian to the tawny Numidian could scarcely find a corner of the world to shelter

her head in. When the fierce Goth and Vandal approached, matters were still worse, and Leisure took refuge in a convent on the winding banks of the Seine, where she employed herself in making anagrams and cutting paper. Her retirement, however, did not pass without censure, for it is said she had an intrigue with the superior of the convent, and that the offspring of this amour was a daughter named Ennui.

Mademoiselle Ennui was wafted over to England in a north-east wind, and settled herself with some of the best families in the kingdom. Indeed the mother seldom makes any long residence in a place without being intruded on by the daughter, who steals in and seats herself silently by her side.

I hope, however, my amiable friend is now enjoying the company of the mother without fear of a visit from the daughter, whom her taste and liveliness will, I am sure, ever exclude from her habitation.

THANKS to my dear Miss Dixon for her frank and affectionate letter. A thousand good wishes attend her; but as I hope to breathe them soon from my lips, I shall spare my pen a task to which it is not adequate.

You have rejoiced my heart by allowing me to

hope that we shall still see you at Palgrave before the important event takes place. If you had not acknowledged that you were going to be married, I should naturally have concluded it from your saying you have not time to read Cecilia. Not time to read a novel!—that is so grave!—Nay, if I had not known you, I should have supposed you had been actually married a dozen years at least. But you *must* read Cecilia, and you must read Hayley's poem, and you may read Scott's poems if you like, and at least you must look at the plates, &c.

Carcasonne, Feb. 15th, 1786.

If at any time, and in any place, a letter from my dear Mrs. Beecroft has always given me a sensible pleasure, she will judge how grateful it must have been to my heart to be remembered by her with so much kindness and affection, and to be informed of her welfare, when the long absence, when the tracts of land and seas between us and those most dear to our hearts, render accounts from England doubly interesting. And indeed when I reflect that I am transported from the banks of the Waveney to the shores of the Mediterranean, I am ready to cry out with Simkin,

"Methinks we 're a wonderful distance from home."

The scenes we have passed through gratify cu-

riosity and fill the imagination; but you, my dear friend, in the mean time have found yourself in situations which awaken feelings the most tender and interesting..... May you experience, may you feel, all the sympathies, all the tender charities of every relation, all of which you are so fitted to adorn!

The ladies of this country, if I may trust what their own countrymen say of them, are not fond of these domestic ties; they wish not to be mothers of a numerous offspring; and their husbands, whose claim to the honour is somewhat more dubious, are still less flattered with being fathers to them. But let me give you some account of our route. From Calais we coasted, as I may say, the rich plains of Flanders and Artois, which however had lost their peculiar beauty, as the harvest was got in. We passed through a part of *Haute Picardie*, and leaving Paris on our right, advanced into Champagne, where we first saw the production that most distinguishes the climate of France from ours,—the boasted vineyards. Having visited the venerable cathedral of Rheims, we crossed several pleasant streams, and from Troyes traced the delightful windings of the Seine to its very source. We next visited Dijon in the midst of the vine-clad hills of Burgundy, and from thence, crossing the Saone, struck into Franche-comté; and from Dole to Besançon travelled along

the banks of the Doux, a fine, full stream, through a country more varied and rich with prospects than we had yet seen. From varied, the country became romantic, and from hilly, mountainous; Nature preparing, as it were, for her more majestic scenes, till at length she swells into full grandeur; and from the heights of Mount Jura the Alps are discovered to the astonished traveller.

At Geneva we were greatly delighted with the society and the situation; but the winter advanced so fast upon us, that we were obliged to abandon our design of visiting Switzerland. From Geneva to Lyons we were still in the midst of *les belles horreurs*, steep mountains, cascades, and lakes. At Lyons the winter was still at our heels, so down the rapid Rhone we sailed in search of the climate of perpetual spring, but like some enchanted island it seemed to fly from our pursuit. At Lyons it was the *vent du Rhone*, at Avignon *la bise*, at Marseilles the *mistral*—which opposed our wishes; till at length, in the orange groves of Hieres, we found the most delicious temperature of air and a verdure perpetually flourishing. But long before we reached Hieres, between Lyons and Avignon, we got amongst the olive-grounds, the figs, the almonds and pomegranates, which spread over all Provence and Languedoc. But they have not here the green pasture, the lowing herd, the hawthorn hedge, the haunt of birds, nor

the various family of lofty trees which give us shade in summer and shelter in winter. As we have been chiefly at inns hitherto, I cannot say a great deal of the inhabitants in general: that they are more lively and eager in their gestures and manner than the English is evident; but as to that great air of gaiety you mention, and which one naturally expects to find in France, it has not struck us; perhaps it might if we were more intimately admitted into their families, and saw the young and the gay; but this I can assure you, they are not to be found, even in Provence, singing and dancing under every green tree. We have lately visited Nismes, a place interesting by its antiquities. *La Maison Carrée* is the most delicate and finished piece of architecture that can be conceived; and the *amphitheatre* gives the most striking idea of Roman greatness. It is calculated to hold 18,000 people; its vast cirque cannot be beheld from a distance without astonishment,—all the other buildings sink into nothing before it. An antiquity perhaps more beautiful still than either of them is the *Pont du Gard*, some leagues from Nismes, constructed to convey water to the town. It looks great as if made by the hands of the giants, and light as if wrought by fairies. Nismes has likewise a more modern work, of which they boast much,—the fountain, and walks belonging to it. This, as well as the *Place*

de Perou at Montpelier, is laid out in a style which a Brown or a Shenstone would but little approve; long straight walks, trees cut into form, water stagnating in stone basons and exactly symmetrized. All this suits but ill with what we have been taught to call taste; yet there is an air of magnificence, and even of gaiety, that in its kind gives pleasure. The very exhibition of art and expense gives an air of grandeur. Its being a work made *by* men, suggests the cheerful idea that it was made *for* men; whereas our more rustic scenes seem made, if not for melancholy, at least for solitary musing: and, in the last place, the exact proportion contrasts it with the surrounding country.

You know, probably, that Montpelier is famous for perfumes. One man, who has got a large fortune by them, has planted a garden with rose-trees, several thousands in number, which in summer perfume the air to a considerable distance.

I hoped to have finished this letter where I began it, at Montpelier; but not having been able to do it, gives me an opportunity to tell you, that we have seen at Pesenas an *echantillon* of the diversions of the Carnival. The young men of the town, with the young ladies, masked, followed by the *paysans* and *paysannes*, danced by torch-light in the streets, upon the esplanade, and all round the town, to the music of the drum and fife, fol-

lowed by a number of spectators of all ranks, all enjoying the cheerful scene. Pesenas is a delightful place; the peach and apricot already are in blossom there, so is the bean; numbers of almond-trees are in full bloom; various shrubs are green with spring, and some trees begin to put out. To crown all, we found there a very lovely English-woman, with whom and her husband we spent two pleasant days. We are now going to Bourdeaux, and so to Orleans and Paris; after which I am sure we shall long to return home.

London, July 7, 1786.

I FEEL an impatience at being again on English ground, and yet not being able to hear news of you. My imagination pictures you with a lovely burden in your arms,—whether boy or girl she is not able to determine, but a charming infant however, that exercises your sweet sprightliness in entertaining it, and delights your sensibility by its early notice. But of this delightful circumstance I want to be certain..... In the mean time let me give you some account of ourselves. After having spent so much time at Paris that we were obliged to give up our original design of visiting Flanders, we returned by way of Chantilly.....

I could not help being struck with the neatness and civility of all the inns on the road from Dover to London. In neatness the English are acknowledged to excell; and though the upper rank in France may practise politeness with more ease and grace than we do, yet it is certain that the lower order are much less respectful and more *grossier* than ours of the same class.

I do not know how it is, I think verily London is a finer town than Paris; and yet it does not appear to me since my return so magnificent as it used to do: I believe the reason is, that Paris has so much the advantage in being built of stone. Another advantage to the environs derived from that is, that they are not fumigated by the abominable brick-kilns which are so numerous near our metropolis.

There is not much new at present in French polite literature. M. Florian has published a didactic romance, Numa Pompilius, in imitation of Telemachus, but it is heavy.

Hampstead, May 1789.

I often please my mind with the sweet scenes of domestic happiness which you must enjoy; yourself in the arms of Mr. and Mrs. Dixon, and your children in yours. Apropos of the sweet children,—I should not be at all alarmed at their

speaking Norfolk; depend upon it it will be only temporary where the parent does not speak it: and after all, they should know the language of the country. I remember when I was in Lancashire being reproved for my affectation in not speaking as the country folks did, when in truth it was beyond my abilities.

London is extremely full now: the trial, the parliamentary business, and fêtes and illuminations, and the Shakespear Gallery, have all contributed to fill the great hive. But among these various objects, none is surely so interesting as the noble effort making for the abolition of the slave-trade. Nothing, I think, for centuries past, has done the nation so much honour; because it must have proceeded from the most liberal motives,—the purest love of humanity and justice. The voice of the Negroes could not have made itself heard but by the ear of pity; they might have been oppressed for ages more with impunity, if we had so pleased.

Hampstead, Aug. 1789.

..... I DO not doubt but your attention, as well as that of every one else, has been engaged lately by the affairs in France. We were much gratified a fortnight ago by seeing Lord Daer, who had been at Paris at the beginning of the com-

motions, and had seen the demolition of the Bastille, and with hundreds more ranged through that till now impregnable castle of Giant Despair. He told us, that after all the prisoners in the common apartments had been liberated, they heard for a long time the groans of a man in one of the dungeons, to which they could not get access, and were at length obliged to take him out by making a breach in the wall, through which they drew him out after he had been forty-eight hours without food; and they could not at last find the aperture by which he was put into the dungeon.

MY DEAR MRS. BEECROFT, Sept. 1790.

IT is but lately that I heard you were returned from your delightful expedition, or I should have written sooner; for I am sure so kind and charming a letter as yours demanded an early acknowledgement. I do not say I envy you your party and your tour, because I have in some measure enjoyed it along with you. I have tracked you the top of Skiddaw; seen you impress the mountains with your light and nymph-like step, and skim over the lakes with a rapid and smooth motion, like a bird that just touches them with her wing without dipping it. I have contemplated the effect such scenes must produce on minds so turned to admire the beauties of nature as yours

and your poetical companions; and I have watched till imagination has kindled, and beauty has swelled into sublimity. Indeed, independently of scenes so wildly picturesque, a journey is the most favourable thing in the world for the imagination; which, like a wheel, kindles with the motion: I shall therefore certainly expect it to produce some fruit.

I suppose you are now returned to your course of instructive reading, and your sweet employment of instructing your little charge. Pray have you seen Sacontala, an Indian drama translated by Sir William Jones? You will be much pleased with it. There is much fancy and much sentiment in it,—much poetry too, and mythology: but these, though full of beauties, are often uncouth and harsh to the European ear. The language of nature and the passions is of all countries. The hero of the piece is as delicate and tender a lover as any that can be met with in the pages of a modern romance; for I hope you can pardon him a little circumstance relative to the *costume* of the country, which is just hinted at in the poem: I mean the having a hundred wives besides the mistress of his heart.—So much for works of entertainment! There is a publication of higher merit set on foot in France by Rabaut St. Etienne and some others,—*La Feuille Villageoise,* of which I have seen the first number. The re-

spectable object of it is to instruct the country people (who are there remarkably ignorant) in morals, in the new laws and constitution of their country, in the state of the arts and new discoveries, as far as can be of practical use to them; and in short, to open their minds and make them love their duties. M. Berquin is engaged in something similar; but this is more extensive. There is room for all true patriots to exert themselves in every way in France, for their situation seems still but too precarious.

Hampstead, May 7th, 1791.

.....You ought, I think, to come to London every spring, to peep into the Exhibition and Shakespear Gallery, and to see our proud metropolis when she adorns her head with wreaths of early roses, and perfumes her crowded streets with all the first scents of the spring. So uncommonly fine has the weather been this year, that in March, if you were in a flower-shop, you might have imagined it the glowing month of June.

I last Sunday attended with melancholy satisfaction the funeral sermon of good Dr. Price, preached by Dr. Priestley, who, as he told us, had been thirty years his acquaintance, and twenty years his intimate friend. He well delineated the character he so well knew. I had just been read-

ing an *eloge* of Mirabeau, and I could not help in my own mind comparing both the men and the tribute paid to their memories. The one died when a reputation raised suddenly, by extraordinary emergencies, was at its height, and very possibly might have ebbed again had he lived longer: the other enjoyed an esteem, the fruit of a course of labours uniformly directed through a long life to the advancement of knowledge and virtue, a reputation slowly raised, without and independent of popular talents. The panegyrist of the one was obliged to sink his private life, and to cover with the splendid mantle of public merit the crimes and failings of the man :—the private character of the other was able to bear the severest scrutiny; neither slander, nor envy, nor party prejudice, ever pretended to find a spot in it. The one was followed even by those who did not trust him: the other was confided in and trusted even by those who reprobated his principles. In pronouncing the *eloge* on Mirabeau, the author scarcely dares to insinuate a vague and uncertain hope that his spirit may hover somewhere in the void space of immensity, be rejoined to the first principles of nature; and attempts to soothe his shade with a cold and barren immortality in the remembrance of posterity. Dr. Priestley parts with his intimate friend with all the cheerfulness which an assured hope of meeting him soon

again could give, and at once dries the tear he excites.

Buxton, Oct. 1794.

My dear Mrs. Beecroft,

Is it permitted me to renew a correspondence which has been too long interrupted, though our friendship, I trust, never has?—strange indeed would it be, if the esteem and affection I owe you could ever subside, or if I could ever forget the marks of kindness and attention I have always received from you. How good it was of you to invite Mr. Barbauld while I have been rambling! I should have been more satisfied with being away if he had accepted your offer; for I should have known then, that he would have no occasion to regret any of the beautiful scenes I have enjoyed without him. I have been much pleased with Scotland. I do not know whether you ever extended your tour so far: if you have not seen it, let me beg that you will; for I do not think that in any equal part of England so many interesting objects are to be met with as occur in what is called the little tour; from Edinburgh to Stirling, Perth and Blair, along the pleasant windings of the Forth and Tay; then by the lakes, ending with Loch Lomond, the last and greatest, and so to Glasgow; then to the Falls of the Clyde, and back by Dumfries; which last, however, we did

not do; for we returned to Edinburgh. Scotland is a country strongly marked with character. Its rocks, its woods, its water, its castles, its towns, are all picturesque, generally grand. Some of the views are wild and savage, but none of them insipid, if you except the bleak, flat, extended moor. The entrance into the Highlands by Dunkeld is striking; it is a kind of gate. I thought it would be a good place for hanging up an inscription similar to that of Dante, "*Per me si va*....."

Edinburgh is so commanding a situation for a capital, I almost regretted it was not one, and that the fine rooms at Holyrood-house are falling into ruins. The Old and the New town make the finest contrast in the world: but beautiful as the New town is, I was convinced, after being some days in it, that its perfect regularity tends towards insipidity, and that a gentle waving line in a street, provided it is without affectation, and has the advantage of some inequality of ground, is more agreeable than streets that cut one another at right angles.

We were much struck with the Falls of the Clyde and its steep banks richly wooded. Indeed, wherever the country is wooded it is beautiful, and it is every where improving in that respect: millions of trees are planted every year; but it is some time before planted trees form a feature of the country. A belt of wood, dotted

clumps, a circlet of firs on a hill, have not the easy and natural appearance of a wood that fills the hollow of a valley, and shapes itself to the bendings and risings of the ground. And now let me whisper in your ear that I long very much to be at home again: the limits which I had set myself not to exceed are expired; and besides, I do not like this country, which has all the dreariness without the grandeur of scenery of that which we have left. The Crescent, however, has a beautiful appearance in a deep hollow surrounded by hills. It looks like a jewel at the bottom of an earthen cup.

Sept. 2, 1795.

.....Your emigrants are very interesting people. I think the English character has never appeared in a more amiable light than in the kind and hospitable attentions which have been pretty generally shown to these unfortunate people. I was much amused with Louvet, and interested; though I confess the interest was somewhat weakened by the reflection that he was by profession a bookseller and a writer of romances; and I think one may discover a few *traits de plume* in the high colouring he gives to the attachment between himself and his wife. What has still more interested me,—because I have a higher opinion of her character, and greater confidence in her sin-

cerity,—is *L'Appel de Madame Roland.* What talents! what energy of character! what powers of description! But have you seen the second part, which has not been printed here, and which contains memoirs of her life from the earliest period to the death of her mother, when she was one-and-twenty? It is surely the most singular book that has appeared since the Confessions of Rousseau; a book that none but a Frenchwoman *could* write, and wonderfully entertaining. I began it with a certain fear upon my mind—What is this woman going to tell me? Will it be any thing but what will lessen my esteem for her? If, however, we were to judge of the female and male mind by contrasting these confessions with those I just now mentioned, the advantage in purity, *comme de raison,* will be greatly on the side of our sex.

Hampstead, July 25, 1796.

..... I DO not know the present course of your reading, but I imagine that two works, at least, have employed the leisure of both of us; Roscoe's Lorenzo, and Mrs. D'Arblay's Camilla. The former is a very capital work: I only wish that instead of making Lorenzo the Magnificent the centre round which every thing revolves, he had made the history of literature itself the professed sub-

ject of his work, and taken the Medici only in connexion with that.—And how do you like Camilla? Not so well, I am afraid, as the former publications from the same hand. I like, however, the story of Eugenia, where the distress is new; and the character of that amiable *imbecille* the uncle: and Mrs. Arlberry's character is very well drawn. I was struck on reading the work with the persuasion, that no *second* work of an author, who has written the first after being in full possession of his powers, can help falling off, and for this reason:—every one has a manner of his own, a vein of thinking peculiar to himself; and on the second publication, though the incidents may be all new, the novelty resulting from this originality is gone for ever. I think Gibbon says, in his very entertaining Memoirs, that nothing can renew the pleasure with which a favourite author and the public meet one another for the first time.

I am just now reduced to regret, my dear friend, that I have taken such small paper. It cuts short what I was going to tell you of General Paoli, whom I met the other day. Had it been thirty years ago, it would have made my heart beat stronger. He told us a good deal about his godson and aid-de-camp Buonaparte, who was going to write Paoli's annals, when he was called upon to give ample matter for his own annals.

Stoke Newington, Jan. 14, 1802.

My dear Mrs. Beecroft,

Why have I not written to you? Ah, why indeed! I wish you would furnish me with a good reason. Long ago I should have done it, it is true..... And pray when do you and the lovely —— and —— go to France? for I take it for granted that you go; and indeed you ought to go: for who would reap more amusement and information, or communicate more of it to your friends, than yourself? I met with three of the tourists lately. Mr. ——, who was formerly a Grecian, is turned Egyptian: the Egyptians are the first people in the world, the tutors of the Greeks and the inventors of all arts and sciences. Mr. —— deals in anecdotes and manners; and Mrs. —— seems to have felt most enthusiasm for the *great man*. My enthusiasm is all gone,—not for Buonaparte, for with regard to him I never had any,—but for most things. I wish there were any process, electric, galvanic, or through any other medium, by which we might recover some of the fine feelings which age is so apt to blunt: it would be the true secret of growing young. One affection, however, I hope will never die in my heart—the dear affection of friendship.

July 28, 1803.

I AM glad to find you have spent the spring so pleasantly. But when you say you made the excursion instead of coming to London, you forget that you might have passed the latter end of a London *winter* in town *after* enjoying the natural *spring* in the country. We have been spending a week at Richmond, in the delightful shades of Ham walks and Twickenham meadows. I never saw so many flowering limes and weeping-willows as in that neighbourhood: they say, you know, that Pope's famous willow was the first in the country; and it seems to corroborate it, that there are so many in the vicinity. Under the shade of the trees we read Southey's Amadis, which I suppose you are also reading. As all Englishmen are now to turn knights-errant and fight against the great giant and monster Buonaparte, the publication seems very seasonable. Pray are you an alarmist? One hardly knows whether to be frightened or diverted on seeing people assembled at a dinner-table, appearing to enjoy extremely the fare and the company, and saying all the while, with a most smiling and placid countenance, that the French are to land in a fortnight, and that London is to be sacked and plundered for three days,—and then they talk of going to watering-places. I am sure we do not

believe in the danger we pretend to believe in; and I am sure that none of us can even form an idea how we should feel if we were forced to believe it. I wish I could lose in the quiet walks of literature all thoughts of the present state of the political horizon.

My brother is going to publish Letters to a young Lady on English Poetry; he is indefatigable. "I wish you were half as diligent!" say you. "Amen!" say I. Love to Eliza and Laura, and thank the former for her note. I shall always be glad to hear from either of them. How delightful must be the soft beatings of a heart entering into the world for the first time, every surrounding object new, fresh and fair,—all smiling within and without! Long may every sweet illusion continue that promotes happiness, and ill befall the rough hand that would destroy them!

Dorking, Sept. 1805.

..... We came hither to take lodgings somewhere in this beautiful country, but found none vacant; so we have been some time at Burford-Bridge, a little quiet sort of an inn in the centre of the pleasant walks; and a few days with our friends the C——s. This is very much of a corn country, and we are in the midst of harvest: the window at which I am now writing looks into a

corn-field, where a family have established their *menage.* The man and his wife are reaping the corn; a cradle with a young child in it is brought into the field by break of day, and set under a hedge; the mother makes a sort of tent with her red cloak to shelter it from the weather; and there she gives it suck, and there they take their meals: two older children either watch the cradle, or run about the fields. A young baronet here has incurred great and deserved odium by forbidding the poor to glean in his fields; and effectually to prevent them, the plough immediately follows the sickle: yet probably this man can talk of the wisdom of our forefathers, and the regard due to ancient observances. This country is remarkable for great richness of wood, which Autumn has as yet only touched with his little finger;—in a month's time they will be enchanting. Another *agrément* here is, that you see no soldiers; though I confess you are put in mind of them by a military road lately cut over Box-hill,—I hope a very needless precaution.

Stoke Newington, Jan. 1, 1813.

MANY happy new years to you, my dear friend, and may they bring you increasing joy in your children and your children's children, and in your circle of friends, and in the various occupations

of all sorts, which the exercise of your talents or the offices of kindness engage you in! To you I may wish this with cheerful hope of its fulfilment. At my time of life, to look forward to new years, is to contemplate the prospect of increasing languor and growing infirmities. Not, I am sure, that I have any reason to complain, for Time deals gently with me; and though I feel that I descend, the slope is easy; and greatly thankful I am that I have, so accessible and so near me, the friends and relations that were assembled at Christmas in order to help me to dispatch your noble turkey. It was indeed so large that I had some difficulty in persuading them that it came to me *inclosed in a letter;* but I pleaded your known veracity, and they submitted. Accept, my dear friend, my best thanks, and believe me, though my pen (it is a naughty pen) has been idle, I did not want it to put me in mind of so dear a friend.

Yes, I have been at Bristol this summer, and spent there almost the only month that could be called summer in the last year. I spent some days at Bath, some at that delightful place Clifton; and I spent a day with Hannah More and her four sisters at her charming cottage under the Mendip hills, which she has named Barley Wood, and which is equally the seat of taste and hospitality. We have had a meeting here for an aux-

iliary Bible Society. Many ladies went, not indeed to speak, but to hear speaking; and they tell me they were much entertained and interested. I honour the zeal of these societies; but it is become a sort of rage, and I suspect outgoes the occasion.

Stoke Newington, Sept. 1813.

We have had great pleasure in seeing again our friend Dr. H. after a tour through Spain, Sicily, and Greece. Pray do you intend to learn modern Greek? I suspect it will grow quite fashionable, from the many tourists to Athens we have had of late; particularly if Eustace succeeds in persuading us to have nothing to do with the French *jargon*, as he is pleased to call the language of Bossuet and of Racine. I suppose you have read Lord Byron's Giaour,—and which edition? because there are five, and in every one he adds about fifty lines; so that the different editions have rather the sisterly likeness which Ovid says the Nereids had, than the identity expected by the purchasers of the same work. And pray do you say Lord Bȳron, or Bў̆ron, in defiance of the *y* and our old friend in Sir Charles Grandison? And do you pronounce Giaour hard *g* or soft *g*? And do you understand the poem at first reading?—because Lord Byron and the Edinburgh

Reviewers say you are very stupid if you don't; and yet the same Reviewers have thought proper to prefix the story to help your apprehension. All these, unimportant as you may think them, are matters of discussion here.

Stoke Newington, Jan. 1814.

My dear Mrs. Beecroft,

There are animals that sleep all the winter;—I am, I believe, become one of them: *they* creep into holes during the same season;—*I* have confined myself to the fireside of a snug parlour. If, indeed, a warm sunshiny day occurs, *they* sometimes creep out of their holes;—so, now and then, have *I*. *They* exist in a state of torpor;—so have *I* done: the only difference being, that *I* have all the while continued the habit of eating and drinking, which, to their advantage, *they* can dispense with. But my *mind* has certainly been asleep all the while; and whenever I have attempted to employ it, I have felt an oppression in my head which has obliged me to desist. What wonderful events have passed during the last few months! How new is the very name of peace to us all; and to those of thirty and under, it is a state that, since they were able to reflect at all on public affairs, they have never known. London seems to have nothing to do now but to give feasts and pop away all the spare gun-

powder in rockets and *feux-de-joie* in honour of its illustrious guests. Everybody has been idle since these royal personages came amongst us. It is in vain even to bespeak a pair of shoes,—not a man will work; and I imagine Alexander must be greatly puzzled, when the concourse in the streets from morning till night shows how many there are that are doing nothing, and the shops and manufactures how much has been done.

Stoke Newington, Jan. 1815.

My dear Mrs. Beecroft,

Thanks for your kind letter, and for the finest turkey I ever saw, which arrived without accident, and fulfilled the end of its being,—its fattening at least,—last Tuesday amid the commendations of the whole party. I cannot tell where the spirit went; but I hope it is animating some other vehicle, and rising by degrees in the scale of existence, till perhaps it may come at length (who knows) to eat turkeys itself.

I give you joy of the peace. It ought to last at least for this next twenty years: for though I am afraid war and peace must always take their turns, like day and night in the natural world, I think War ought to be satisfied, as the other dark and unlovely power is, with *share and share alike.* The two striking features of the present times in

Britain are *religion* and *charity;* and I should think they are both of them well inclined to pacific measures.

Stoke Newington, Nov. 14, 1818.

Our tourists are mostly now returned. Such numbers have resided more or less abroad, that I cannot help thinking the intercourse must influence in some degree the national manners, which I find by Madame de Stael are not yet to the taste of our neighbours. They allow us to be respectable, but they plainly intimate they do not think us amiable. When I read such censures, I cannot help saying in my mind to the author,—I wish you knew such a one, and such a one, of my acquaintance; I am sure you could not but love them.—Yet, after all, I fear we must acknowledge something about us dry, cold, and reserved; more afraid of censure, than gratified by notice; very capable of steadiness in important pursuits, but not happy in filling up the pauses and intervals of life with ingenious trifles and spontaneous, social hilarity.....

It seems to me that there is more room for authors in history than in any other department. It is continually growing. It is like a tree, the dead leaves and branches of which are continually pruned and cleared away, and fresh green shoots

arising. How much less interesting since the French Revolution are the glories and conquests of Louis XIV.! What is the whole field of ancient history, which knew no sea but the Mediterranean, to the vast continent of America, with its fresh and opening glories! Will they be wise by our experience, peaceable, moderate, virtuous? No: they will be learned by our learning, but not wise by our experience. Each country, as each man, must buy his own experience.

Stoke Newington, Feb. 1824.

My dear Mrs. Beecroft,

The state of my eyes, which have been very weak of late, and are giving me a hint that they have served me nearly long enough, have hindered me for some time from answering your kind letter.—Long may you enjoy that activity and flow of spirits which make life indeed a blessing; and which by conversation, by the very look of a happy and social spirit, communicates pleasure to all within its influence. But, you will say, a social spirit often leads one to mourn. It is very true: we are just now sympathizing with..... But what is all this to you? will you say: these are not your acquaintance or connexions. Why, that is very true; but I have so long been accustomed to see you take part with ready and

affectionate sympathy in the habits, connexions, and trains of ideas of your friends, that I am always apt to suppose that where I am intimate, you cannot be a stranger; and that where I am interested, you cannot be indifferent. I heard a lady say once, that she should not at all care or interest herself about any thing which might happen to her friends or relations when she was out of the world;—I mean, if she were to know it now. How unnatural! I need not tell you, I think, that she was not a parent. Nor do I like those metaphysical moralists, who, by a refinement of subtle investigation, assert that our anxiety for our friends proceeds only from a wish to avoid, *for ourselves*, the pain we are conscious we should feel whenever they suffer:—Miserable evasions of Nature's best feelings!

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LETTERS TO MRS. J. TAYLOR.

DEAR MADAM, Yarmouth, Sept. 1st, 1785.

THOUGH I have had the pleasure (it was a very real one) of a glimpse of Mr. Taylor, yet I cannot prevail on myself to entrust either him or Mr. Barbauld with those affectionate wishes and grateful acknowledgements of your friendship which, before I leave England, I wish to convey to you with my own hand. Mr. Barbauld will tell you our route.—Now it comes to the point, I cannot help feeling it a solemn thing to leave England, and all our dear connexions in it, for so many months. Often will they be in our minds; and when we recollect those who hold the highest places in our esteem and affection, Mrs. Taylor will always be presented to our thoughts. Allow me, dear madam, again to thank you for your kindness to us at Norwich, and the pleasure we enjoyed in that short but delightful intercourse with you and your family. On that family may health and every blessing ever rest.

By the time we return, I think I shall have had a sufficient draught of idleness, and be very ready to engage again in some active pursuit; but at present, Avaunt care! and *Vive la bagatelle!* for we are bound for France.

DEAR MADAM, Paris, June 7th, 1786.

THOUGH we expect now very soon to finish our long pilgrimage, I cannot quit this country without giving you a little testimonial that in it we think of those beloved English friends from whom the sea now divides us: they are often recalled to my mind by different and opposite trains of thinking,—for contrast, you know, is one source of association; and when I see the Parisian ladies covered with rouge and enslaved by fashion, cold to the claims of maternal tenderness, and covering licentiousness with the thin veil of a certain factitious decency of manners, my thoughts turn away from the scene, and delight to contemplate the charming union formed by deep affection and lasting esteem,—the mother endowed with talents and graces to draw the attention of polite circles, yet devoting her time and cares to her family and children—English delicacy, unspoiled beauty, and unaffected sentiment,—when I think of these, (and *your* friends will not be at a loss to guess where I look for them,) it gives the

same relief to my mind as it would to my eye when wearied and dazzled by their sand-walks and terraces, if it could repose upon the cheerful and soft green of our lawny turf. I would not, however, have you imagine that I am out of humour with Paris, where we have enjoyed much pleasure; only it is the result of our tour, that taking in all things, manners and government as well as climate, we like our own country best: and this is an opinion certainly favourable to our happiness, who shall probably never leave England again. The weather with us is, and has been, extremely hot. The trees are in their freshest green; but one sees that the grass will soon be burnt if we have not rain. Indeed they are obliged every day to water the turf in all their gardens where they are solicitous about verdure. The environs of Paris are charming, yet I think evidently inferior to those of London. Yesterday (Whitsunday) we were gratified with a view of all the magnificence of Versailles. In compliment to the day the water-works played, and there was the brilliant procession of the *cordon bleu;* in consequence of which all Paris in a manner was poured into Versailles; and I was ready to forgive the enormous expense and ostentation of this palace, when I saw a numerous people of all sorts and degrees filling the rooms and wandering in the gardens, full of admiration, and deriving both

pleasure and pride from their national magnificence; and many a one, I dare say, exulted in the thought that the *grand monarque's* horses are better lodged than is the king of England himself. The grand gallery filled with Le Brun's paintings is of a striking beauty; the gardens are full of water thrown up in artificial fountains, and glittering through artificial *bosquets;* the walks are adorned with whole quarries of marble wrought into statues. In short, art and symmetry reign entirely; and I hope they will never attempt to modernize these gardens, because they are a model of magnificence in their kind, and Art appears with so much imposing grandeur, that she seems to have a right to reign. The *petit Trianon* belonging to the queen is in another style; with cottages and green lawns and winding walks of flowering shrubs in the English mode, which indeed prevails very much at present.

There is a person here, the Abbé d'Hauy, who teaches the blind to read by means of books printed expressly for them in a relief of white. The undertaking is curious; but they are at present somewhat in the state of the blind men brought up for painters in the island of Laputa, who were not so perfect in the mixing their colours but that they sometimes mistook blue for red.

The French stage is not, I think, at present very brilliant; three of their best actors have lately

left it. But at the Italian theatre they have a delightful little piece, which under the name of a comic opera draws tears from all the world. It is called Nina, or *La Folle d'Amour*, and Mademoiselle du Gazon acts the part of Nina; and does it with such enchanting grace, such sweet and delicate touches of sensibility and passion, as I never saw upon any theatre. It is the *sweet bells jangled out of tune*, but not *harsh*: no raving, no disorder of dress; but every look and gesture showed an unsettled mind, and a tenderness inimitable. At the Opera they have likewise an actress full of grace, Mademoiselle St. Huberti; but there it is a grace beyond mere nature. Everybody (that is everybody who follows the fashion) leaves Paris in the summer, which was not the case some years ago. We stay now for a fine show,—the procession on the *Fête Dieu*, in which all the tapestry of the Gobelins is exposed in the streets. We shall return by Calais and proceed immediately to London, where we shall take lodgings for some time.

Will you do me the favour to remember us with grateful affection to all our friends at Norwich? there are so many that claim our esteem, I do not attempt to enumerate them; but do not forget to give a kiss for us to each of your dear boys, and to assure Mr. Taylor of Mr. Barbauld's and my affectionate esteem.

1806.

I AM now reading Mr. Johnes's Froissart, and I think I never was more struck with the horrors of war,—simply because *he* seems not at all struck with them; and I feel ashamed at my heart having ever beat with pleasure at the names of Cressy and Poitiers. He tells you the English marched into such a district; the barns were full, and cattle and corn plentiful; they burned and destroyed all the villages, and laid the country bare; such an English earl took a town, and killed men, women, and little children;—and he never makes a remark, but shows he looks upon it as the usual mode of proceeding.

May, 1813.

.....THERE is certainly at present a great deal of zeal in almost every persuasion;—certainly much more in England, as far as I am able to judge, than when I was young. I often speculate upon what it will produce,—not uniformity of opinion certainly; that is a blessing we seem not destined here to enjoy, if indeed it would be a blessing. But will it tend to universal toleration and enlarged liberality of thinking? or, with increase of zeal, will the church spirit of bigotry revive, and unite with the increasing power of government to crush the spirit of research and

freedom of opinion? Bible societies, missionary schemes, lectures, schools for the poor, are set on foot and spread, not so much from a sense of duty as from being the real taste of the times; and I am told that Mrs. Siddons's readings are much patronized by the evangelical people, as they are called, of fashion, who will not enter the doors of a theatre. Would that with all this there could be seen some little touch of feeling for the miseries of war, that are desolating the earth without end or measure! One should be glad to see some *suspicion* arise that it was not consistent with the spirit of the Gospel; but this you do not see even in good people.

..... Friends at a distance do not want some medium of sympathy though they do not meet. I have sometimes looked upon new books in that light. When I peruse a book of merit to be generally read, I feel sure, though not informed of it, that precisely the same stream of ideas which is flowing through my mind is flowing through my friend's also; and without any communication, either by word or letter, I know that he has admired and criticized, and laughed and wept as I have done.

June 13, 1810.

My dear Mrs. Taylor,

A thousand thanks for your kind letter; still more for the very kind visit that preceded it;—though short, too short, it has left indelible impressions on my mind; my heart has truly had communion with yours,—your sympathy has been balm to it; and I feel that there is no one *now* on earth to whom I could pour out that heart more readily, I may say so readily, as to yourself. Very good also has my dear amiable Mrs. Beecroft been to me, whose lively sweetness and agreeable conversation has at times won me to forget that my heart is heavy.

I am now alone again, and feel like a person who has been sitting by a cheerful fire, not sensible at the time of the temperature of the air, but the fire removed, he finds the season is still *winter*. Day after day passes, and I do not know what I do with my time; my mind has no energy, nor power of application. I can tell you, however, what I have done with some hours of it, which have been agreeably employed in reading Mrs. Montague's Letters. I think her nephew has made a very agreeable present to the public; and I was greatly edified to see them printed in modest octavo, with Mrs. Montague's sweet face (for it is a very pretty face) at the head.

They certainly show a very extraordinary mind, full of wit, and also of deep thought and sound judgement. She seems to have liked not a little to divert herself with the odd and the ludicrous, and shows herself in the earlier letters passionately fond of balls and races and London company; this was natural enough at eighteen. Perhaps you may not so easily pardon her for having early settled her mind, as she evidently had, not to marry except for an establishment. This seems to show a want of some of those fine feelings that one expects in youth: but when it is considered that she was the daughter of a country gentleman with a large family, and no fortune to expect, and her connexions all in high life, one is disposed to pardon her, especially as I dare say she would never have married a fool or a profligate. I heard her say,—what I suppose very few can say,—that she never was in love in her life. Many of the letters are in fact essays; and I think had she turned her thoughts to write in that way, she would have excelled Johnson.

I have also turned over Lamb's Specimens of Old Plays, and am much pleased with them. I made a discovery there, that La Motte's fable of Genius, Virtue, and Reputation, which has been so much praised for its ingenious turn, is borrowed from Webster, an author of the age of Shakespear; or they have taken it from some

common source, for a Frenchman was not very likely to light upon an English poet of that age; they knew about as much of us then, as we did fifty years ago of the Germans. It is surprising how little invention there is in the world; no *very* good story was ever invented. It is perhaps originally some fact a little enlarged; then, by some other hand, embellished with circumstances; then, by somebody else, a century after, refined, drawn to a point, and furnished with a moral. When shall we see the moral of the world's great story, which astonishes by its events, interests by the numerous agents it puts in motion, but of which we cannot understand the bearings, or predict the catastrophe? It is a tangled web, of which we have not the clue. I do not know how to rejoice at this victory, splendid as it is, over Buonaparte, when I consider the horrible waste of life, the mass of misery, which such gigantic combats must occasion. I will think no more of it; let me rather contemplate your family: there the different threads all wind evenly, smoothly, and brightly.

Stoke Newington, Dec. 8th, 1818.

I WILL write now my dear friend is better, is recovering, is, I hope, in a fair way to be soon quite well, and all herself again; and she will ac-

cept, and so will Mr. T. and Mrs. R. my warmest congratulations. To tell you how anxious we have been, would, I trust, be superfluous, or how much joy we have felt in being relieved from that anxiety. It is pleasant to have some one to share pleasure with; and though I could have had that satisfaction in a degree with every one who knows you, it is more particularly agreeable to me at this time to have your dear Sarah to sympathize with and talk to about you. Among other things we say, that you must not let *mind* wear out *body*, which I suspect you are a little inclined to do. Mind is often very hard upon his humble yoke-fellow, sometimes speaking contemptuously of her, as being of a low, mean family, in comparison with himself; often abridging her food or natural rest for his whims. Many a headache has he given her when, but for him, she would be quietly resting in her bed. Sometimes he fancies that she hangs as a dead weight upon him, and impedes all his motions; yet it is well known, that though he gives himself such airs of superiority, he can in fact do nothing without her; and since, however they came together, they are united for better for worse, it is for his interest as well as hers, that she should be nursed and cherished, and taken care of.—And so ends my sermon.

LETTER TO MISS TAYLOR,

NOW

MRS. REEVE.

Tunbridge Wells, August 11, 1801.

I MAY call you dear Susan, may not I? for I can love you, if not better, yet more familiarly and at my ease under that appellation than under the more formal one of Miss Taylor, though you have now a train to your gown, and are, I suppose, at Norwich invested with all the rights of womanhood. I have many things to thank you for:—in the first place for a charming letter, which has both amused and delighted us. In the next place, I have to thank you for a very elegant veil, which is very beautiful in itself, and receives great additional value from being the work of your ingenious fingers. I have brought it here to parade with upon the Pantiles, being by much the smartest part of my dress. O that you were here, Susan, to exhibit upon a *donky*—I cannot tell whether my orthography is right, but a donky is the *monture* in high fashion here; and I assure you, when

covered with blue housings, and sleek, it makes no bad figure:—I mean a lady, if an elegant woman, makes no bad figure upon it, with a little boy or girl behind, who carries a switch, meant to admonish the animal from time to time that he is hired to walk on, and not to stand still. The ass is much better adapted than the horse to show off a lady; for this reason, which perhaps may not have occurred to you, that her beauty is not so likely to be eclipsed: for you must know that many philosophers, amongst whom is ——, are decidedly of opinion that a fine *horse* is a much handsomer animal than a fine woman; but I have not yet heard such a preference asserted in favour of the *ass*,—not our English asses at least,—a fine Spanish one, or a zebra, perhaps.....

It is the way to *subscribe* for every thing here; —to the library, &c.: and among other things we were asked on the Pantiles to subscribe for eating fruit as we pass backwards and forwards. "How much?"—"Half-a-crown." "But for how long a time?"—"As long as you please." "But I should soon eat half-a-crown's-worth of fruit."—"O, you are upon honour!"

There are pleasant walks on the hills here, and picturesque views of the town, which, like Bath, is seen to advantage by lying in a hollow. It bears the marks of having been long a place of resort, from the number of good and rather old-

built houses,—all let for lodgings; and shady walks, and groves of old growth. The sides of many of the houses are covered with tiles; but the Pantiles, which you may suppose I saw with some interest, are now paved with freestone.

We were interested in your account of Cambridge, and glad you saw not only buildings but men. With a mind prepared as yours is, how much pleasure have you to enjoy from seeing! That all your improvements may produce you pleasure, and all your pleasures tend to improvement, is the wish of

Your ever affectionate.

LETTERS TO MRS. CARR.

Pit Cot, near Bridgend, July 18, 1797.

.....We flattered ourselves with seeing some of the beauties of South Wales in coming hither, but we were completely disappointed by the state of the weather. This country is bleak and bare, with fine views of the sea, and a bold rocky coast, with a beach of fine hard sand. We have been much pleased with watching the coming in of the tide among the rocks, against which it dashes, forming columns of spray twenty and thirty foot high, accompanied with rainbows, and with a roar like distant cannon. There are fine caverns and recesses amongst the rocks; one particularly, which we took the opportunity of visiting yesterday, as it can only be entered at the ebb of the spring-tides. It is very spacious, beautifully arched, and composed of granite rocks finely veined with alabaster, which the imagination may easily form into a resemblance of a female figure, and is of course the Nereid of the grotto. We wished to have stayed longer; but our friend hurried us away, lest the tide should rush in,

which it is supposed to do from subterraneous caverns, as it fills before the tide covers the sand of the adjacent beach. I was particularly affected with the fate of two lovers, (a young gentleman and lady from Clifton,) whose friends were here for the sake of sea-bathing. They stole out early one morning by themselves, and strolled along the beach till they came to this grotto, which, being then empty, they entered. They admired the strata of rock leaning in different directions: they admired the incrustation which covers part of the sides, exactly resembling honeycomb; various shells imbedded in the rock; the sea-anemone spreading its purple fringe,—an animal flower clinging to the rocks. They admired the first efforts of vegetation in the purple and green tints occasioned by the lichens and other mosses creeping over the bare stone. They admired these together; they loved each other the more for having the same tastes; and they taught the echoes of the cavern to repeat the vows which they made of eternal constancy. In the mean time the tide was coming in: of this they were aware, as they now and then glanced their eye on the waves, which they saw advancing at a distance; but not knowing the peculiar nature of the cavern, they thought themselves safe; when on a sudden, as they were in the furthest part of it, the waters rushed in from fissures in the rock with terrible

roaring. They climbed from ledge to ledge of the rocks,—but in vain; the water rose impetuously, and at length filled the whole grotto. Their bodies were found the next day, when the tide was out, reclining on a shelf of rock; he in the tender attitude of supporting her, in the very highest accessible part, and leaning his own head in her lap,—so that he must have died first. Poor lovers! If, however, you should be too much grieved for them, you may impute the whole, if you please, to a waking *dream* which I had in the grotto.

Bristol, August 1797.

We are here very comfortably with our friend Mr. Estlin, who, like some other persons that I know, has the happy art of making his friends feel entirely at home with him:—he and Mrs. E. follow their occupations in the morning, and we our inclinations. The walks here on both sides the river are delightful; and the scenery at St. Vincent's rocks, whether viewed from above or below, is far superior, in my opinion, even to the beautifully dressed scenes that border the Thames, though these exceed it in fine trees.....

I have seen Dr. Beddoes, who is a very pleasant man: his favourite prescription at present to ladies is, the inhaling the breath of cows; and as he does not, like the German doctors, send the ladies

to the cow-house, the cows are to be brought into the lady's chamber, where they are to stand all night with their heads within the curtains. Mrs.—, who has a good deal of humour, says the benefit cannot be mutual; and she is afraid, if the fashion takes, we shall eat diseased beef. It is fact, however, that a family have been turned out of their lodgings, because the people of the house would not admit the cows: they said they had not built and furnished their rooms for the hoofs of cattle.

Hampstead, Oct. 1801.

MY DEAR MRS. CARR,

THOUGH I hope the time approaches when we shall be within reach of one another again, I feel the want of our accustomed intercourse too strongly not to wish to supply it in some manner by a letter. Besides, I want to wish you joy on the peace, which came at last so unexpectedly, and almost overwhelmed us with the good news. We have hardly done illuminating and bouncing and popping upon the occasion. The spontaneous joy and mutual congratulations of all ranks show plainly what were the wishes of the people, though they dared not declare them. And now France lies like a huge loadstone on the other side the Channel, and will draw every mother's child of us to it. Those who know French are

refreshing their memories,—those who do not, are learning it; and every one is planning in some way or other to get a sight of the promised land.

Our Hampstead neighbours are returning to us from the lakes, and the sea, and the ends of the earth. I have been puzzling myself to account for this universal disposition amongst us to migrate at a certain time of the year and change our way of life; and I have been fancying that we English lie under the same spell which the fairies are said to do,—by which during a month every year they are obliged to be transformed, and to wander about exposed to adventures. So some of our nymphs are turned into butterflies for the season, others into Naiads, and sport about till the sober months come, when they resume their usual appearance and occupation of notable housewives, perhaps in Cheapside or the Borough. As to you, you carry your cares with you, and therefore must be pretty much the same, except the dripping locks of the Naiad; but Sarah, I imagine, is at this moment skimming along the shore like a swallow, or walking with naked feet like a slender heron in the water, or nestling among the cliffs. Wherever she is, my love to her.

Southampton, July 10th.

My dear Mrs. Carr,

Have you ever seen the isle of Wight? if not, you have not seen the prettiest place in the king's dominions. It is such a charming *little* island! In this great island, which we set foot on half an hour ago, the sea is at such a distance from the greater part of it, that you have no more acquaintance with it than if you were in the heart of Germany; and even on the coast, England appears no more an island to the eye than France does; but in this little gem of the ocean called the isle of Wight, you see and feel you are in an island every moment. The great ocean becomes quite domestic; you see it from every point of view; you have it on the right hand, you look and you have it on the left also; you see both sides of the island at once;—you look into every creek and corner of it, which produces a new and singular feeling. We have taken three different rides upon and under high cliffs, corn-fields and villages down to the water's edge, and a fine West India fleet in view, with the sails all spread, and her convoy most majestically sailing by her. We saw Lord Dysart's seat, and Sir Richard Worsley's: at the former there is a seat in the rock which shuts out every object but the shoreless ocean,—for it looks towards France: at the latter there is an

attempt at an English vineyard; the vines are planted on terraces one above another. Another day's excursion was to the Needles; we walked to the very point, the toe of the island: the seagulls were flying about the rock like bees from a hive, and little fleets of puffins with their black heads in the water. Allum bay looks like a wall of marble veined with different colours. The freshness of the sea air, and the beauty of the smooth turf of the downs on which we rode or walked, was inexpressibly pleasing. The next day we visited the north side of the island, richly wooded down to the water's edge, and rode home over a high down with the sea on both sides and a rich country between; the corn beginning to acquire the tinge of harvest time. In short, I do believe that if Buonaparte were to see the isle of Wight, he would think it a very pretty *appanage* for some third or fourth cousin, and would make him king of it—if he could get it.

Stoke Newington, Oct. 1822.

My dear Mrs. Carr,

I think I never was so long without seeing you since we were acquainted. May I hope that it will not be much longer? I want to know of the health and welfare of every individual of you ..... My love to your young ladies; tell them

I am sorry they must wait to be married till Parliament meets again; but every body says it is the most difficult thing in the world. Dr. ——, indeed, has accomplished it in spite of obstacles; but he is a man of energy and perseverance. Englishmen are said to love their laws;—that is the reason, I suppose, they give us so many of them, and in different editions.

LETTERS TO MRS. SMITH.

DEAR MADAM, Stoke Newington, Feb. 26, 1803.

IT would have given me great pleasure to have been among those friends who crowd about you to congratulate your arrival again on English ground; but the distance,—first the severity of the weather, and then indisposition consequent upon it, prevent my having that pleasure. I cannot content myself, however, without writing a line to welcome you all home. We hear you have been very much pleased with Paris, which indeed was to be expected. The canvass people and the marble people must be sufficient to make a rich voyage of it, even if the French people had not opened their mouths.....

We are apt to accuse some of you travellers of bringing us over an influenza from Paris, softened indeed in passing over the Channel, but severe enough to set us all a-coughing. We try to amuse ourselves, however, with reading; and among other things have been greatly amused and interested with Hayley's Life of Cowper, which I would much advise you to read if it comes in your

way. Hayley, indeed, has very little merit in it, for it is a collection of letters with a very slender thread of biography; but many of the letters are charming, particularly to his relation Lady Hesketh; and there is one poem to his *Mary*, absolutely the most pathetic piece that ever was written. We have also read, as I suppose you have done, Madame de Stael's *Delphine*. Her pen has more of Rousseau than any author that has appeared for a long time. I suppose you have heard it canvassed and criticized at Paris.....

DEAR MADAM, Stoke Newington, Jan. 7, 1806.

I THINK there is a spell against our profiting by your kind invitations. The occasion on which you now ask us to Parndon is a very interesting one, and we should have had great pleasure in keeping with you your *silver feast*, as the Germans call it when a couple have lived happily a quarter of a centuty together. But at present it is impossible.....

It is perhaps after all as well for me that there is a circumstance which imperiously says "You cannot go;" because, apart from that consideration, if I were tempted by my inclination, a violent cold which I have upon me would, I fear, make me unequal to a winter journey. Meantime my heart is with you, and Mr. Barbauld's, and most cor-

dially do we join in congratulations and wishes that the latter half of your lives may be as happy as the former; for more I think it cannot be, as you seem to me to have all the ingredients, external and internal, of which that precious compound *happiness* is composed; for a compound I maintain it to be, and of a vast many ingredients too,—begging Mr. Harris's pardon, whose dialogue on the subject I read at sixteen with great edification. But your happiness may be *multiplied*, however, as your numerous family spreads abroad into the world, and you have the pleasure of seeing them acquire for themselves in their own families, that esteem and consideration which they now derive from yours. May this and every succeeding year increase your satisfaction in them, and find and leave you both happy! &c. &c.

LETTERS TO DR. AND MRS. ESTLIN.

My dear Friends, Hampstead, Dec. 5, 1799.

It is now much longer than I wish it ever to be since any letter has passed between us: I wish, therefore, to hear news of you both; particularly as you are drawing near the end of a session, the fatigues of which must always more or less give some wear and tear to your health and exhaust your spirits. I hope you have not forgotten that, in order to recruit them, you proposed coming, both of you, to London this Christmas; and I hope that you have by no means forgot that it was a part of the plan to give us as much of your time at Hampstead as you can spare consistently with other engagements. Write us word, then, that you are preparing to pack off the boys and come to us; and I assure you we shall feel more enlivened by the news than by ten gallons of Dr. Beddoes's most vivifying air. How often do we recall the heartfelt pleasures we enjoyed in the daily and unrestrained intercourse of Southendown; the philosophic discussions, the infantile mirth, the caves, the rocks, and especially the two

nymphs, to whom,—if they are now within your circle,—we beg to be affectionately remembered...

We have been much entertained by the Annual Anthology; there are some charming pieces in it. To pass from poetry to divinity—Have you seen a small piece, which has been much read and speculated upon here, Apeleutheros? Some attribute it to one person, some to another; but the fact is, the author has kept his secret well. It is written with great candour, but slight, considering the importance of the subject to be discussed. It has not been published; and I cannot avoid a melancholy sensation on reflecting, that such are the times we live in, that a bookseller dares not publish a pamphlet written with perfect decency, and in which, moreover, there is not a word of politics. But we should not be better in France. How the revolutions of that country mock all calculation! I should suppose that the late events have not tended to bring newspapers into more request than they were at Southendown.

May I soon receive a favourable answer with respect to your health, spirits, and good intentions with respect to London and Hampstead!—Come, and brighten the chain of friendship, as the Indians say.

Stoke Newington, Dec. 1815.

.....If you ask what *I* am doing—nothing. Pope, I think, somewhere says, "The last years of life, like tickets left in the wheel, rise in value." The thought is beautiful, but false; they are of very little value,—they are generally past either in struggling with pains and infirmities, or in a dreamy kind of existence: no new veins of thought are opened; no young affections springing up; the ship has taken in its lading, whatever it may be, whether precious stones or lumber, and lies idly flapping its sails and waiting for the wind that must drive it upon the wide ocean.

Have you seen Lord Byron's new poem, The Bride of Abydos? and have you read Madame de Stael's Germany? You will find in the latter many fine ideas, beautiful sentiments, and entertaining remarks on manners and countries: but in her account of Kant and the other German philosophers, she has got, I fancy, a little out of her depth. She herself is, or affects to be, very devotional; but her religion seems to be almost wholly a matter of imagination,—the *beau ideal* impressed upon us at our birth, along with a taste for beauty, for music, &c. As far as I understand her account of the German school, there seems to be in many of them a design to reinstate the doctrine of innate ideas, which the cold philosophy,

as they would call it, of Locke discarded. They would like Beattie and Hutcheson better than Paley or Priestley. I do not like Lord Byron's poem quite so well as his last; and I cannot see any advantage in calling a nightingale *bulbul*, or a rose *gul*, except to disconcert plain English readers.

Stoke Newington, Jan. 1814.

YES, my dear friends, 'tis as I said, you are snowed up at the Hyde, very comfortable I dare say, with a fine library and prints, &c., and I hope a cheerful Christmas party; at least, if the party is there, you will make them so. But whether the inclosed will ever come to your hands is a melancholy consideration; for if you offer to stir, I expect you will be buried in the snow, in which case I intend to write your epitaph,—"Here lies, &c. in candour and purity of mind equalling the snow that covers them:"—or, "Reflecting light from heaven on the world around them:"—or, "They were lovely in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided:"—or,

"While far from home
They sought to roam,
By wandering fancies seized,
'Twixt earth and sky
They buried lie,
For so the Fates have pleased."

The lines, I own, are not very finished; but it is not worth while to take much pains about them, unless one were sure of the catastrophe. On the supposition, however, that you will be reading this comfortably by Mr. Coates's fire-side, accept, my dear friends, my thanks for the pleasant days, —very pleasant, but very few,—that you were so good as to bestow upon me: if you can enlarge the gift, most thankfully shall I receive it.

1814.

My days of travelling are now nearly over; yet I find a little variety as necessary, perhaps, to relieve the tedium of life, as once it was to recruit from its toils and avocations. I do not know how it is with you at Bristo, but in most places there has been lately a migration into France of almost all who could command money and time. I was amused with the contrast between a lively pleasant-tempered man and a *poco curante*. "How do you like France?" said I to the first. "I have spent," said he, "seven weeks of uninterrupted happiness." "How do you like France?" to the second. "I have been there, because one must go, one is ashamed not to have been, it is a thing over." "A lively nation?" "Manners quite spoiled, no agreeable company." "It is

possible they may not be partial to the English just now, as we have so lately been with fire and sword into their territory:—but the museums?" "Valuable to be sure; but they do not properly belong to Paris." "The theatres, sir?" "Now and then, when Talma acts: but to visit all their little paltry theatres, and every evening, as some do, I had rather sit at home in my chamber and read." And so ended my dialogue with the *poco curante*. Not with such indifference, but with the strong feelings which you who witnessed the destruction of the Bastille can appreciate, Mr. —— says he should *abhor* going to Paris. As to the ladies who go, they think of nothing but smuggling lace and silk shawls.

My dear Mrs. Estlin,

I have just been reading, as probably you have also, six close volumes of Miss Seward's letters, which, she informs us, was only a twelfth part of her correspondence in, I think, twenty years. I have also been reading a letter of the poet M——'s to my brother, in which, apologizing for his long silence, he says, "I verily believe, that if I had been an antediluvian, I could have let a hundred years pass between every letter, and feel the most violent twinges of conscience every day

of that century for my omission, without their working any reformation in that respect." Now I look upon myself to be between both these characters,—to which I approximate most I must leave you to determine.

Everybody has been abroad this uncommonly fine summer, but my brother and sister and myself. I spent one day only at Hampstead, where I met Walter Scott, the *lion* of this London season, and one day at Chigwell. The road to Chigwell is through a part of Hainault Forest; and we stopped to look at Fairlop oak, one of the largest in England; a complete ruin, but a noble ruin, which it is impossible to see without thinking of Cowper's beautiful lines, "Who lived when thou wast such." The immoveable rocks and mountains present us rather with an idea of eternity than of long life. There they are, and there they have been before the birth of nations. The tops of the everlasting hills have been seen covered with snow from the earliest records of time. But a *tree*, that has life and growth like ourselves, that, like ourselves, was once small and feeble, that certainly some time began to be,—to see it attain a size so enormous, and in its bulk and its slow decay bear record of the generations it has outlived,—this brings our comparative feebleness strongly in view. "Man passeth away, and where is he?" while "the oak

of our fathers" will be the oak of their children, and *their* children.

MY DEAR MRS. ESTLIN, 1819.

I WAS just going to write to you when I received your kind letter; for I had heard of your son's marriage, and wished to congratulate you on the event: but I do it with much more pleasure, now that I learn from your letter the full satisfaction and pleasure that you feel in the match. You are fortunate, my dear friend, in having so excellent and well-principled a son; fortunate in having him married agreeably to your wishes; and very fortunate in having him and your other children within a walk of your door or within it.

We are all pretty much as usual: for myself, indeed, I am sensible I grow weaker both in mind and body, and I am sensible it is natural and right it should be so. How many friends have I survived! A very dear one Mrs. Kenrick was: I had no prospect, indeed, of ever seeing her again, nor, with the privations she suffered, (of which her almost total deafness was the severest,) could I wish her to live; yet there is a melancholy in the thought, Gone for ever! which no other separation can inspire.—But why do I write in

this strain to you, when I write on purpose to congratulate you on a wedding?—How soon children become, from playthings, subjects of education; then objects of anxiety for their settling in the world; and then, very often, are transplanted wide away from their parents' home—perhaps to America. The more particularly fortunate you:—so I began, and so I conclude.

Stoke Newington, Jan. 1824.

My dear Mrs. Estlin,

I will not say I was not disappointed in being obliged to give up the hope of seeing you this year; but you know best the time that suits you, and I dare say you have done what is right and proper. With regard to myself, I do not reckon much upon any enjoyment that has months between it and me. I am arrived at a period when life has no more to give, and every year takes away from the powers both of body and mind; when the great tendency is to inaction and rest, and when all subject of thankfulness or congratulation must be, not how much you enjoy, but how little you suffer. Then the powers of man strive—how vainly!—to penetrate the veil; to pierce the thick darkness that covers the future: life seems of no value but for what lies beyond it;

and even our views of the future are perhaps cheerful or gloomy according to the weather or our nerves.

Stoke Newington, Nov. 23, 1824.

It is so long since I heard of you or yours, that I begin to be impatient, and moreover I am disappointed; for you certainly did flatter me some time ago with the idea that I should see you here before this summer was ended. And now, while I had hardly finished my sentence, your kind letter arrives.—Let me beg of you to give up your reasons against paying me a visit before this year is concluded. Think of my age, and come to me while my eyes serve me to look on your countenance, and my ears can catch your words, and my heart can be exhilarated by the conversation of a friend.

I think nothing flourishes more in Newington than schools. We have several set up lately, besides charity-schools, of which so many have been established, that I should imagine there is not an individual among the lower order who cannot get his son instructed, if he really desires it. We have some little Greek boys here, who, in their national costume, are great objects of curiosity. They are protected by Mr. Bowring. By the way, are you not sorry Lord Byron is dead, just when he was

going to be a hero? He has filled a leaf in the book of fame, but it is a very blotted leaf.

It is amazing how building increases everywhere near London, though, as I said, my neighbours decrease. This is the necessary lot of age. One of our ministers prays, that when we come to die we may have nothing to do but to die. In one sense the petition is rational: but if it means, nothing to do for ourselves; nothing to do for others; nothing to do in any of the useful stations of life; the languor and privations, if not the sufferings of age, more than balancing its few enjoyments; then, truly, I do not think the blessing is much to be prayed for. I am rather getting into a melancholy vein, and I ought not, for I have much to be thankful for, and shall have more when your next letter comes to tell me, as I hope it will, Such a day, such an hour, I have taken my place for London, thence to proceed to Newington,—where you will be sincerely welcomed by, dear Mrs. Estlin, your affectionate friend.

LETTERS TO MRS. FLETCHER.

MY DEAR MADAM, Sept. 1813.

I HAVE to thank you for your very entertaining letter. I would have undergone a good wetting, and even a suspicion of danger, to have enjoyed the grandeur of your thunder-storm. Indeed I am rather partial to a death by lightning; and were I to choose the mode of my departure, should certainly prefer to be "by touch ethereal slain." However, as I have no right to choose for you, I am glad you got shelter under the roof of your hospitable, though penurious, farmer. Surely he must be a phænomenon even in the Highlands: but I believe it is rare in all professions for the same person to amass and to enjoy riches. Even with regard to the treasures of the mind, which one should suppose would include the power of using them, the laborious collector of facts and dates produces some ponderous volume, which sleeps on the shelf till some light and airy wit skims it for tale and anecdote, or some original genius shapes and moulds it into a system.

I am now reading the third and fourth volumes of Mrs. Montague's Letters. To me, who have lived through all the time she writes of, they are interesting,—independent of the wit and talent,—as recalling a number of persons and events once present to my mind: they are also, I think, very entertaining, though, as letters, somewhat studied. With all her advantages she seems not to have been happy. She married not Mr. Montague from affection. It is evident she looked upon him as a wise and kind friend, but nothing more;—a little *too* wise sometimes, when he kept her in the country longer than she liked. To a person so married, nothing will fill the mind and give a permanent interest to life, but children. She lost her child; and notwithstanding all that nature and all that fortune had given, and high cultivation, and chosen society, and public esteem, she speaks of life as a thing to be got through, rather than to be enjoyed.

Stoke Newington, June 1814.

WHAT do I think of the French!—In the first place, it requires some time before one can think at all, events succeed each other with such astonishing rapidity. The constitution held out to the king's acceptance was indeed all one can wish,—the principles of liberty were carried

further than even in ours,—but you see he has not signed it; and if he had, it is a jest to talk of a constitution, when three or four foreign armies are in the kingdom.

France, proud France, gallant France, is a conquered country. I do not think we yet know her real inclinations; convulsed by a revolution, tyrannized over by a despot, and owing her deliverance to her very enemies,—how she is humbled, how much she has suffered; but how much she has inflicted! The French, however, have a better chance for happiness with the mild imbecility of the Bourbons than with Napoleon.

This was written a week ago: and now Spain—Spain has disappointed all our hopes: "Down with the Cortes,—up with the Inquisition!" and, as at Naples some years ago, the few fine spirits who would have rejoiced in a better order of things will be consigned to dungeons. I do not know what we can gather from the contemplation of all these revolutions, but this; that the concerns and destinies of all the world are too high for us; that we must wait the winding up of the drama, and be satisfied in promoting and enjoying the happiness of our own little circle.....

The three persons who have most engaged the attention of London societies this year have been women:—Miss Edgeworth, Madame de Stael, and now the Duchess of Oldenburg, who shows, they

say, a most rational and unsated curiosity. But kings and emperors are now appearing on the stage, and the lesser lights must "pale their ineffectual fires." Dear madam, will not you and Miss F. come to London to see all these sights? You are much mistaken if you think, as you seem to do, that you shall find us anxiously speculating about the liberties of Europe. We shall be squeezing to get a sight of Alexander, and taking tickets for fêtes, and looking at the prince's fireworks, and criticizing the Oldenburg hat, and picking up anecdotes to shine with in the next party. Shall I be equally mistaken, or shall I not, when I suppose that you in Edinburgh are deep in mathematics and metaphysics with Dugald Stewart? I want to know how his work is relished. I am glad he has spoken a good word for *final causes*, the search for which, under the guidance of judgement and impartiality, certainly assists investigation as truly as it is the reward of it.

Stoke Newington, August 1814.

.....WHAT an alteration a few weeks has made in London! If you but crossed the street a month ago, you had a chance of meeting a prince or an emperor; and now it is empty beyond the usual emptiness of summer, and everybody you meet has been, or is planning to go, across the

Channel. I am sorry to say, that among my female acquaintance the joy of bringing home, cleverly concealed, shawls, lace, &c., seems to dwell more upon the fancy than museums of art or new scenes of nature; and truly, some of the young men seem better able to criticize French cookery than French conversation, or the Venus and Apollo. Is there not something strange and rather revolting in speaking of the French, as most have done for these twenty years past, with the utmost abhorrence and contempt,—and pouring ourselves over their country the moment it is accessible, to mix in their parties and bring home their fashions? ..... We have been full fed with novels lately, and shall be with poems. Think of a thick quarto of ——'s, entitled *Fragments*, being only a taste of the second part of a poem, which I suppose he means to give us some time or other. I should like to supply him with a motto:—"And of the fragments there were taken up *twelve baskets full.*"

DEAR MADAM, April, 1817.

IT has been the impulse of my heart to write to you, and yet I hardly know how. What can I say? how can I express the shock this awful, this most affecting event has given me, has given all of us! How are the fairest hopes destroyed!

How are the dearest ties severed! When was the uncertainty of life and all its hopes exemplified in a more solemn manner! Dear Grace! I had hoped myself sometime, perhaps this summer, to see more of her,—to see her open the stores of her mind,—to see the modest flower expand and show all its lustre;—but it is shut up for ever here, to blow, I trust, in a happier climate. Young as she was, she has seen, perhaps, the best of life. Like Young's Narcissa, "She sparkled, was exhaled, and went to heaven." No long sickness to wear the mind as well as body,—none of the decays incident to a more advanced period; she leaves life, it is true, in all its freshness, but without having tasted its cares or sorrows.

And is it nothing to have raised and cultured such a mind? Is she not fitter for another state, with higher powers, than many a one who has passed sixty years of a drowsy existence? May we not presume that, like a forward schoolboy, who has run rapidly through his classes and left the school, while others of his own age and standing are still drudging on,—she will step into a higher form with more advantages? O but, I think I hear you say, the mother's heart must bleed. It must; I know it. God comfort you, my dear Mrs. F., and Mr. F., and all your family. Your mind will turn, I know it will, to the promising children you still have. One jewel has

fallen from your maternal crown, but many remain; you are still rich. May God enable you to bear what he has laid upon you!

Stoke Newington, Sept. 1819.

How good you are to me, my dear Mrs. F., and how kind and how cheering are your expressions of regard! I will not tell you how much you have made me love you by your late visit. Your kindness, your frankness, the interest you have made me take in your family, the thought how much your own feelings have been tried, have made me look on you with mingled reverence and affection. I hope the Miss F.'s visit to London will have made sufficiently favourable impressions to induce them sometimes to repeat it; and yet I fancy I hear them saying, that after all, this great overgrown mass of buildings, these pushing, bustling, crowded streets,—this hubbub and hum of the busy hive,—that poverty and crime which form the back-ground of the gay picture, are not so attractive as their own Edinburgh, with its picturesque site,—the singularity of the Old, the splendour of the New town,—with the remembrances that attach (softened by being only remembrances) to the decayed palace and the closed doors of the hall of legislation—with taste and the spirit of inquiry emanating from the

seat of literature, and spreading its influence over society, and with all the romantic stories attached to glen and brook and heath, impressed with the still recent footsteps of a wild and hardy race, but lately brought within the pale of civilised society;—stories the treasure-house of the poet and the novelist. And if they do make this preference, I have not much to say against it, provided you keep your Edinburgh as it is, and do not imitate us too much.

Our weather is still pleasant. I am going to spend two or three days at ——, Mr. and Miss B. and myself in a post-chaise. An agreeable companion in a post-chaise, though I would not advertise for one, is certainly an agreeable thing. You talk, and yet you are not bound to talk; and if the conversation drops, you may pick it up again at every brook or village, or seat you pass,—"What's o'clock?" and "How's the wind?" "Whose chariot's that we left behind?" You may sulk in a corner if you will; nay, you may sleep without offence.

LETTER TO MISS. F.

Stoke Newington, Sept. 1811.

"And when did you hear from Miss F.?" "Pray, madam, when did you hear from Miss F.?". "I hope Miss F. is well! Is she got to E—— yet?" This is a specimen of the questions often asked me by those who have been too much interested in the hours they enjoyed of your company while you were in this part of the world, not to feel an interest in you when you had left it.

To these I reply, that I have *not heard;* that I shall be most happy at any time to hear, when dear Miss F. feels any inclination to write; that I do not think she is particularly fond of writing letters; and that I have myself too much of her taste in this respect, and am conscious of too many sins of my own in this matter, to urge any claims on other people, supposing I had them, which in this instance I do not pretend to have. At present, however, I cannot resist taking the *opportunity*, as the children say, of Mr. ——'s conveyance... ..... chiefly to express the affectionate remem-

brance which must always dwell in my heart of one so dear to me.....

We have had the very beautiful and interesting sight of a balloon sent off from the neighbouring fields. The carriages of all sorts, eager countenances exhibited from windows, tops of houses and church steeples, made a gayer spectacle, I think, than any exhibition within walls could have been made. I saw it like a majestic dome among the trees; it swelled, it rose gently, it vibrated; then it sprung up into the sky, light as—what shall I say? what can I say of a substance that is itself lighter than air? I must say, I believe, as light as thought—as your thoughts, I mean, for mine are often heavy. &c. &c.

LETTER TO ———

Stoke Newington, Oct. 25, 1823.

.....THE enigma you do me the honour to ask for will accompany this; but I have first to find it; for though I have looked a good deal, I have not yet been able to lay my hands on it. I beg to make proviso that if I should want myself to insert it in any publication, I may be at liberty to do it. Though, truly, that is not very likely; for well do I feel one faculty after another withdrawing, and the shades of evening closing fast around me; and be it so! What does life offer at past eighty (at which venerable age I arrived one day last June); and I believe you will allow that there is not much of new, of animating, of inviting, to be met with after that age. For my own part, I only find that many things I knew, I have forgotten; many things I thought I knew, I find I know nothing about; some things I know, I have found not worth knowing; and some things I would give—O what would one not give to know? are beyond the reach of human ken. Well, I believe

this is what may be called prosing, and you can make much better use of your time than to read it.

I saw yesterday two boys, modern Greeks, in the costume of their country, introduced by Mr. Bowring, who has the charge of them—"*du Grec—ah, ma sœur, du Grec; ils parlent du Grec!*" I have been reading one or two American novels lately. They are very well, but I do not wish them to write novels yet. Let them explore and describe their new country; let them record the actions of their Washington, the purest character perhaps that history has to boast of; let them enjoy their free, their unexpensive government, number their rising towns, and boast that persecution does not set her bloody foot in any corner of their extensive territories. Then let them kindle into poetry; but not yet,—not till the more delicate shades and nicer delineations of life are familiar to them,—let them descend to novels. But, tempted by writing to you, I am running on till my eyes are tired, and perhaps you too. Compliments to Mrs. ——, and all your family. If I find the riddle, I will send it to you; meantime I am, with the truest esteem and friendship,

Your affectionate friend.

LETTERS TO DR. AIKIN*.

Caroline-street, Jan. 31, 1787.

I DO not owe you a letter 'tis true; but what of that? I take it for granted you will like to hear from me; and to hear from or write to you gives me more pleasure than most things in this great city. The hive is now full; almost everybody that intends to come to town is come, and the streets rattle with carriages at all hours. Do not you remember reading in the Spectator of a great black tower, from which were cast nets that catched up everybody that came within a certain distance? This black tower I interpret to be this great smoky city; and I begin to be afraid we are got too much within its attraction, for the nets seem to be winding round about us; nay, we had some serious thoughts last week of setting up our tent here.....

We are got into the visiting way here, which I do not consider quite as idle employment, because it leads to connexions; but the hours are into-

* These Letters were accidentally omitted in their proper place.

lerably late. The other day at Mrs. Chapone's none of the party but ourselves was come at a quarter before eight; and the first lady that arrived said she hurried away from dinner without waiting for the coffee. There goes a story of the Duchess of D——, that she said to a tradesman "Call on me to-morrow morning at four o'clock"; and that the honest man, not being aware of the extent of the term morning, knocked the family up some hours before daybreak. Last week we met the American bishops at Mr. V.'s,—if bishops they may be called, without title, without revenue, without diocese, and without lawn sleeves. I wonder our bishops will consecrate them, for they have made very free with the Common Prayer, and have left out two creeds out of three. Indeed, as to the Athanasian creed, the King has forbidden it in his chapel, so that will soon fall.

I have been much pleased with the poems of the Scottish ploughman, of which you have had specimens in the Review. His Cotter's Saturday Night has much of the same kind of merit as the School-mistress; and the Daisy, and the Mouse, which I believe you have had in the papers, I think are charming. The endearing diminutives, and the Doric rusticity of the dialect, suit such subjects extremely. This is the age for self-taught genius: a subscription has been raised for a pipe-maker of Bristol, who has been discovered to have

a poetic turn; and they have transplanted him to London, where they have taken him a little shop, which probably will be frequented at first and then deserted. A more extraordinary instance is that of a common carpenter at Aberdeen, who applied to the professors to be received in the lowest mathematical class: they examined him, and found he was much beyond it; then for the next, and so on, till they found he had taught himself all they could teach him; and instead of receiving him as a student, they gave him a degree.

Miss Bowdler's Essays are read here by the graver sort with much approbation. She is the lady who betook herself to writing upon having lost her voice; but above all, the Political State for 1787 is read by everybody. The Eaton boys have published a periodical paper among themselves, which they say is clever. Dr. Price has a letter from Mr. Howard, dated Amsterdam; he says the Emperor gave him a long audience. A pasquinade was fixed upon the gate of the lunatic hospital at Vienna. "*Josephus, ubicunque secundus, hic primus.*"—And now, after this idle chit-chat, good part of which I have written while my hair was dressing, let me tell you I long to hear from you, and to hear you are well; and so, with Mr. B.'s and Charles's love to all, I bid you adieu.

Hampstead, Sept. 5, 1787.

I AM very glad to be informed what is the proper method to engage you to write verses, and should inclose herewith an order for a score or two of lines, if I thought the command were certain to be as efficacious as the lovely Anna's.

> The generous Muse, whom harsh constraint offends,
> At Anna's call with ready homage bends;
> Well may she *claim*, who *gives* poetic fire,
> For what her lips command, her eyes inspire.

Come va l'Italiano? I have read a volume of Goldoni's Plays; which are not all worked up to superior excellence, as you may suppose, since he wrote sixteen in a season. Two are taken from Pamela; but he has spoiled the story by making Pamela turn out to be the daughter of an attainted Scotch peer, without which salvo for family pride he did not dare to make her lover marry her. Goldoni's great aim seems to have been to introduce what he calls comedies of character, instead of the pantomime, and the continual exhibition of harlequin and his *cortége*, which was supported only by the extempore wit of the actors. There is in his *Teatro Comico* a critique which puts me much in mind of Shakespear's instructions to the players. It abounds with good sense,—which, and a desire to promote good manners, seem in what I have read to be his characteristics. I find by

him that the prompter repeats the whole play before the actors.

Our plot begins to thicken; as —— says. We have taken into our family for six months, and perhaps longer, a young Spaniard who comes solely to learn English. We dined with the young man, his uncle, and another Spaniard, who is secretary to the ambassador, at Mr. W——'s, where there was a great mixture of languages. The secretary, as well as French and Spanish, spoke English very well; the young man, Spanish and French; and the uncle, though he had been several years in England, only Spanish. As Mr. W. had told us they were strict Catholics, we expressed a fear lest we should not be able to provide for the youth agreeably on fast days: but he said, "*Tout jour est jour gras pour moi!*" to which the uncle learnedly added,—that it was not what went into the mouth, but what came out of it, that defileth. As far as we have yet seen (but he has been with us only two days), we find him very well behaved and easy in the family; but the great difficulty is to entertain him: he is quite a man, of one- or two-and-twenty, and rather looks like a Dutchman than a Spaniard. Did you ever see *seguars*—leaf-tobacco rolled up of the length of one's finger, which they light and smoke without a pipe?—he uses them. "And how does Mr. B. bear that?" say you: O, he keeps it snug

in his room. I would not advise the boys to imitate his accent in French, for he pronounces it with a deep guttural: I fancy he would speak Welsh well.

It gave me very great pleasure the other day to see my father's old friend Dr. Pulteney, whom Dr. Garthshore brought to us. It is a strange and mixt emotion, however, which one feels at sight of a person one has not seen for twenty years or more. The alteration such a space of time makes in both parties, at first gives a kind of shock;—it is your friend, but your friend disguised.

We are making a catalogue of our books; and I have left a great deal of space under the letters A. and B. for our future publications.

Hampstead, Feb. 1788.

We are waiting with great impatience for two things, your book and my sister,—your child and your wife, that is to say.....

I have been reading an old book, which has given me a vast deal of entertainment,—Father Herodotus, the father of history; and the father of lies too, his enemies might say. I take it for granted the original has many more beauties than Littlebury's humble translation, which I have been perusing: but at any rate, a translation of an ori-

ginal author gives you an idea of the times totally different from what one gains by a modern compilation. I am much entertained in observing the traces of truth in many of his wildest fables; as where he says it was impossible to proceed far in Scythia on account of vast quantities of feathers which fell from heaven and covered all the country.

We are reading too Sir T. More's Utopia. He says many good things; but it wants a certain salt, which Swift and others have put into their works of the same nature. One is surprised to see how old certain complaints are. Of the frequent executions, for instance: twenty men, he says, being hung upon one gibbet at a time: of arable land turned to pasture, and deserted villages in consequence.

I hope the exertions which are now making for the abolition of the slave-trade will not prove all in vain. They will not, if the pleadings of eloquence or the cry of duty can be heard. Many of the most respectable and truly distinguished characters are really busy about it, and the press and the pulpit are both employed; so I hope something must be done. I expect to be highly gratified in hearing Mr. Hastings's trial, for which we are to have tickets some day. This impeachment has been the occasion of much pomp, much eloquence, and much expense; and there I sup-

pose it will end. As somebody said, It must be put off for the judges to go their circuit, resumed. late, and so it will fall into the summer amusements.

Hampstead, May 1791.

WHAT do you say to Pitt and Fox agreeing so well about the affair of libels? Is there any thing behind the curtain? I hope not; for I own I have felt myself much interested for Fox since his noble and manly behaviour, mixed with so much sensibility and tempered with so much forbearance, towards Burke. It puts one in mind of the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius.

I am reading with a great deal of interest Ramsay's History of the American Revolution; and I do not wonder that the old story of Greece and Rome grows, as you say, flat, when we have events of such importance passing before our eyes, and from thence acquiring a warmth of colour and authenticity which it is in vain to seek for in histories that have passed from hand to hand through a series of ages. How uniformly great was Congress, and what a spotless character Washington! All their public acts, &c., are remarkably well drawn up. We are reading in idle moments, or rather dipping into, a very different work, Boswell's long-expected Life of Johnson. It is like going to Ranelagh; you meet all your acquaint-

ance: but it is a base and a mean thing to bring thus every idle word into judgement—the judgement of the public. Johnson, I think, was far from a great character; he was continually sinning against his conscience, and then afraid of going to hell for it. A Christian and a man of the town, a philosopher and a bigot, acknowledging life to be miserable, and making it more miserable through fear of death; professing great distaste to the country, and neglecting the urbanity of towns; a Jacobite, and pensioned; acknowledged to be a giant in literature, and yet we do not trace him, as we do Locke, or Rousseau, or Voltaire, in his influence on the opinions of the times. We cannot say Johnson first opened this vein of thought, led the way to this discovery or this turn of thinking. In his style he is original, and there we can track his imitators. In short, he seems to me to be one of those who have shone in the *belles lettres*, rather than, what he is held out by many to be, an original and deep genius in investigation.

Hampstead, 1791.

..... I DO not know whether I said so before, but I cannot help thinking that the revolution in France will introduce there an entire revolution in education; and particularly be the ruin of classical learning, the importance of which must be

lessening every day; while other sciences, particularly that of politics and government, must rise in value, afford an immediate introduction to active life, and be necessary in some degree to everybody. All the kindred studies of the cloister must sink, and we shall live no longer on the lean relics of antiquity.

Apropos of France, Mrs. Montague, who entertains all the aristocrats, had invited a marchioness of Boufflers and her daughter to dinner. After making her wait till six, the marchioness came, and made an apology for her daughter, that just as she was going to dress she was seized with a *degoût momentanée du monde*, and could not wait on her.

There is a little Frenchman here at Hampstead who is learning the language, and he told us he had been making an attempt at some English verses. "I have made," says he, "four couplets in masculine and feminine rimes." "O sir," says I, "you have given yourself needless trouble, we do not use them." "Why, how so," says he; "have you no rules then for your verse?" "Yes sir, but we do not use masculine and feminine rimes." Well, I could not make him comprehend there could be any regular poetry without these rimes.

Mr. Brand Hollis has sent me an American poem, The Conquest of Canaan,—a regular epic in twelve books; but I hope I need not read it. Not

that the poetry is bad, if the subject were more interesting. What had he to do to make Joshua his hero, when he had Washington of his own growth?

We are at present reading Anacharsis, and are much pleased with it. There is nothing of adventure, nothing like a novel; but the various circumstances relating to the Greeks are classed and thrown together in such a manner as to dwell on the mind. It has just the effect which it would have if in the Museum, instead of being shown separately the arms and dresses of different nations, you had figures dressed up and accoutred in them: the Otaheitan mourner walking to a *morai;* the warrior full-armed in the attitude of attack; and the priest with all the various instruments of sacrifice before the altar. Thus they become grouped in the mind.

I want you to propose a metaphysical question to your Society, which Mr. B. and I have had great debates upon; and I want to know your opinion and my sister's. It is this: If you were now told that in a future state of existence you should be entirely deprived of your consciousness, so as not to be sensible you were the same being who existed here,—should you or should you not be now interested in your future happiness or misery? or, in other words, Is continued consciousness the essence of identity?

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

THE HILL OF SCIENCE:

A VISION.

IN that season of the year when the serenity of the sky, the various fruits which cover the ground, the discoloured foliage of the trees, and all the sweet but fading graces of inspiring autumn open the mind to benevolence, and dispose it for contemplation; I was wandering in a beautiful and romantic country, till curiosity began to give way to weariness; and I sat me down on the fragment of a rock overgrown with moss, where the rustling of the falling leaves, the dashing of waters, and the hum of the distant city, soothed my mind into the most perfect tranquillity; and sleep insensibly stole upon me, as I was indulging

the agreeable reveries which the objects around me naturally inspired.

I immediately found myself in a vast extended plain, in the middle of which arose a mountain higher than I had before any conception of. It was covered with a multitude of people, chiefly youth; many of whom pressed forwards with the liveliest expression of ardour in their countenance, though the way was in many places steep and difficult. I observed that those who had but just begun to climb the hill, thought themselves not far from the top: but as they proceeded, new hills were continually rising to their view; and the summit of the highest they could before discern, seemed but the foot of another, till the mountain at length appeared to lose itself in the clouds. As I was gazing on these things with astonishment, my good genius suddenly appeared. "The mountain before thee," said he, "is the hill of Science. On the top is the temple of Truth, whose head is above the clouds, and whose face is covered with a veil of pure light. Observe the progress of her votaries; be silent, and attentive."

I saw that the only regular approach to the mountain was by a gate called the gate of languages. It was kept by a woman of a pensive and thoughtful appearance, whose lips were continually moving, as though she repeated something to herself. Her name was Memory. On

entering this first inclosure, I was stunned with a confused murmur of jarring voices and dissonant sounds; which increased upon me to such a degree, that I was utterly confounded, and could compare the noise to nothing but the confusion of tongues at Babel. The road was also rough and stony, and rendered more difficult by heaps of rubbish continually tumbled down from the higher parts of the mountain, and by broken ruins of ancient buildings, which the travellers were obliged to climb over at every step; insomuch that many, disgusted with so rough a beginning, turned back, and attempted the mountain no more: while others, having conquered this difficulty, had no spirits to ascend further, and sitting down on some fragment of the rubbish, harangued the multitude below with the greatest marks of importance and self-complacency.

About half way up the hill, I observed on each side of the path a thick forest covered with continual fogs, and cut out into labyrinths, cross alleys, and serpentine walks, entangled with thorns and briars. This was called the wood of Error: and I heard the voices of many who were lost up and down in it, calling to one another, and endeavouring in vain to extricate themselves. The trees in many places shot their boughs over the path, and a thick mist often rested on it; yet never

so much but that it was discernible by the light which beamed from the countenance of Truth.

In the pleasantest part of the mountain were placed the bowers of the Muses, whose office it was to cheer the spirits of the travellers, and encourage their fainting steps with songs from their divine harps. Not far from hence were the fields of Fiction, filled with a variety of wild flowers springing up in the greatest luxuriance, of richer scents and brighter colours than I had observed in any other climate. And near them was the dark walk of Allegory, so artificially shaded, that the light at noonday was never stronger than that of a bright moonshine. This gave it a pleasingly romantic air for those who delighted in contemplation. The paths and alleys were perplexed with intricate windings, and were all terminated with the statue of a Grace, a Virtue, or a Muse.

After I had observed these things, I turned my eyes towards the multitudes who were climbing the steep ascent, and observed amongst them a youth of a lively look, a piercing eye, and something fiery and irregular in all his motions. His name was Genius. He darted like an eagle up the mountain, and left his companions gazing after him with envy and admiration: but his progress was unequal, and interrupted by a thousand caprices. When Pleasure warbled in the valley, he

mingled in her train. When Pride beckoned towards the precipice, he ventured to the tottering edge. He delighted in devious and untried paths; and made so many excursions from the road, that his feebler companions often outstripped him. I observed that the Muses beheld him with partiality; but Truth often frowned and turned aside her face. While Genius was thus wasting his strength in eccentric flights, I saw a person of a very different appearance, named Application. He crept along with a slow and unremitting pace, his eyes fixed on the top of the mountain, patiently removing every stone that obstructed his way, till he saw most of those below him who had at first derided his slow and toilsome progress. Indeed there were few who ascended the hill with equal and uninterrupted steadiness; for, beside the difficulties of the way, they were continually solicited to turn aside by a numerous crowd of Appetites, Passions, and Pleasures, whose importunity, when they had once complied with, they became less and less able to resist; and, though they often returned to the path, the asperities of the road were more severely felt, the hill appeared more steep and rugged, the fruits which were wholesome and refreshing, seemed harsh and ill-tasted; their sight grew dim, and their feet tripped at every little obstruction.

I saw, with some surprise, that the Muses,

whose business was to cheer and encourage those who were toiling up the ascent, would often sing in the bowers of Pleasure, and accompany those who were enticed away at the call of the Passions. They accompanied them, however, but a little way, and always forsook them when they lost sight of the hill. Their tyrants then doubled their chains upon the unhappy captives, and led them away without resistance to the cells of Ignorance, or the mansions of Misery. Amongst the innumerable seducers who were endeavouring to draw away the votaries of Truth from the path of Science, there was one so little formidable in her appearance, and so gentle and languid in her attempts, that I should scarcely have taken notice of her, but for the numbers she had imperceptibly loaded with her chains. Indolence (for so she was called), far from proceeding to open hostilities, did not attempt to turn their feet out of the path, but contented herself with retarding their progress; and the purpose she could not force them to abandon, she persuaded them to delay. Her touch had a power like that of the torpedo, which withered the strength of those who came within its influence. Her unhappy captives still turned their faces towards the temple, and always hoped to arrive there; but the ground seemed to slide from beneath their feet, and they found themselves at the bottom before they suspected that they had

changed their place. The placid serenity which at first appeared in their countenance, changed by degrees into a melancholy languor, which was tinged with deeper and deeper gloom as they glided down the stream of Insignificance; a dark and sluggish water, which is curled by no breeze, and enlivened by no murmur, till it falls into a dead sea, where the startled passengers are awakened by the shock, and the next moment buried in the gulf of Oblivion.

Of all the unhappy deserters from the paths of Science, none seemed less able to return than the followers of Indolence. The captives of Appetite and Passion could often seize the moment when their tyrants were languid or asleep, to escape from their enchantment; but the dominion of Indolence was constant and unremitted, and seldom resisted till resistance was in vain.

After contemplating these things, I turned my eyes towards the top of the mountain, where the air was always pure and exhilarating, the path shaded with laurels and other evergreens, and the effulgence which beamed from the face of the goddess seemed to shed a glory round her votaries. "Happy," said I, "are they who are permitted to ascend the mountain!"—but while I was pronouncing this exclamation with uncommon ardour, I saw standing beside me a form of diviner features and a more benign radiance. "Happier,"

said she, "are those whom Virtue conducts to the mansions of Content!"—"What," said I, "does Virtue then reside in the vale?"—"I am found," said she, "in the vale; and I illuminate the mountain. I cheer the cottager at his toil, and inspire the sage at his meditation. I mingle in the crowd of cities, and bless the hermit in his cell. I have a temple in every heart that owns my influence; and to him that wishes for me I am already present. Science may raise you to eminence, but I alone can guide you to felicity!" While the goddess was thus speaking, I stretched out my arms towards her with a vehemence which broke my slumbers. The chill dews were falling around me, and the shades of evening stretched over the landscape. I hastened homeward, and resigned the night to silence and meditation.

ON ROMANCES:

AN IMITATION.

Of all the multifarious productions which the efforts of superior genius, or the labours of scholastic industry, have crowded upon the world, none are perused with more insatiable avidity, or disseminated with more universal applause, than the narrations of feigned events, descriptions of imaginary scenes, and delineations of ideal characters. The celebrity of other authors is confined within very narrow limits. The geometrician and divine, the antiquary and the critic, however distinguished by uncontested excellence, can only hope to please those whom a conformity of disposition has engaged in similar pursuits; and must be content to be regarded by the rest of the world with the smile of frigid indifference, or the contemptuous sneer of self-sufficient folly. The collector of shells and the anatomist of insects is little inclined to enter into theological disputes: the divine is not apt to regard with veneration the uncouth diagrams and tedious calculations of the astronomer: the man whose life

has been consumed in adjusting the disputes of lexicographers, or elucidating the learning of antiquity, cannot easily bend his thoughts to recent transactions, or readily interest himself in the unimportant history of his contemporaries: and the cit, who knows no business but acquiring wealth, and no pleasure but displaying it, has a heart equally shut up to argument and fancy, to the batteries of syllogism, and the arrows of wit. To the writer of fiction alone every ear is open, and every tongue lavish of applause; curiosity sparkles in every eye, and every bosom is throbbing with concern.

It is, however, easy to account for this enchantment. To follow the chain of perplexed ratiocination, to view with critical skill the airy architecture of systems, to unravel the web of sophistry, or weigh the merits of opposite hypotheses, requires perspicacity, and pre-supposes learning. Works of this kind, therefore, are not so well adapted to the generality of readers as familiar and colloquial composition; for few can reason, but all can feel; and many who cannot enter into an argument, may yet listen to a tale. The writer of romance has even an advantage over those who endeavour to amuse by the play of fancy; who, from the fortuitous collision of dissimilar ideas, produce the scintillations of wit; or by the vivid glow of poetical imagery delight the imagination

with colours of ideal radiance. The attraction of the magnet is only exerted upon similar particles; and to taste the beauties of Homer, it is requisite to partake his fire; but every one can relish the author who represents common life, because every one can refer to the originals from whence his ideas were taken. He relates events to which all are liable, and applies to passions which all have felt. The gloom of solitude, the languor of inaction, the corrosions of disappointment, and the toil of thought, induce men to step aside from the rugged road of life, and wander in the fairy land of fiction; where every bank is sprinkled with flowers, and every gale loaded with perfume; where every event introduces a hero, and every cottage is inhabited by a Grace. Invited by these flattering scenes, the student quits the investigation of truth, in which he perhaps meets with no less fallacy, to exhilarate his mind with new ideas, more agreeable, and more easily attained: the busy relax their attention by desultory reading, and smooth the agitation of a ruffled mind with images of peace, tranquillity, and pleasure: the idle and the gay relieve the listlessness of leisure, and diversify the round of life, by a rapid series of events pregnant with rapture and astonishment; and the pensive solitary fills up the vacuities of his heart by interesting himself in the fortunes of

imaginary beings, and forming connexions with ideal excellence.

It is, indeed, no ways extraordinary that the mind should be charmed by fancy, and attracted by pleasure; but that we should listen with complacence to the groans of misery, and delight to view the exacerbations of complicated anguish, that we should choose to chill the bosom with imaginary fears, and dim the eyes with fictitious sorrow, seems a kind of paradox of the heart, and can only be credited because it is universally felt. Various are the hypotheses which have been formed to account for the disposition of the mind to riot in this species of intellectual luxury. Some have imagined that we are induced to acquiesce with greater patience in our own lot by beholding pictures of life tinged with deeper horrors, and loaded with more excruciating calamities; as, to a person suddenly emerging out of a dark room, the faintest glimmering of twilight assumes a lustre from the contrasted gloom. Others, with yet deeper refinement, suppose that we take upon ourselves this burden of adscititious sorrows, in order to feast upon the consciousness of our own virtue. We commiserate others, say they, that we may applaud ourselves; and the sigh of compassionate sympathy is always followed by the gratulations of self-complacent esteem. But surely

they who would thus reduce the sympathetic emotions of pity to a system of refined selfishness, have but ill attended to the genuine feelings of humanity. It would, however, exceed the limits of this paper, should I attempt an accurate investigation of these sentiments. But let it be remembered, that we are more attracted by those scenes which interest our passions, or gratify our curiosity, than those which delight our fancy: and, so far from being indifferent to the miseries of others, we are, at the time, totally regardless of our own. And let not those on whom the hand of Time has impressed the characters of oracular wisdom, censure with too much acrimony productions which are thus calculated to please the imagination, and interest the heart. They teach us to think, by inuring us to feel: they ventilate the mind by sudden gusts of passion; and prevent the stagnation of thought, by a fresh infusion of dissimilar ideas.

SELÁMA;

AN IMITATION OF OSSIAN.

WHAT soft voice of sorrow is in the breeze? what lovely sunbeam of beauty trembling on the rock? Its bright hair is bathed in showers; and it looks faint and dim, through its mist on the rushy plain. Why art thou alone, maid of the mournful look? The cold dropping rain is on the rocks of Torléna, the blast of the desert lifts thy yellow locks. Let thy steps be in the hall of shells, by the blue winding stream of Clutha: let the harp tremble beneath thy fingers; and the sons of heroes listen to the music of songs.

Shall my steps be in the hall of shells, and the aged low in the dust? The father of Seláma is low behind this rock, on his bed of withered leaves; the thistle's down is strewed over him by the wind, and mixes with his grey hair. Thou art fallen, chief of Etha! without thy fame; and there is none to revenge thy death. But thy daughter will sit, pale beside thee, till she sinks, a faded flower, upon thy lifeless form. Leave the

maid of Clutha, son of the stranger! in the red eye of her tears!

How fell the car-borne Connal, blue-eyed mourner of the rock? Mine arm is not weakened in battle; nor my sword without its fame.

Connal was a fire in his youth, that lighten'd through fields of renown: but the flame weakly glimmered through gray ashes of age. His course was like a star moving through the heavens: it walketh in brightness, but leaveth no track behind; its silver path cannot be found in the sky. The strength of Etha is rolled away like a tale of other years; and his eyes have failed. Feeble and dark, he sits in his hall, and hears the distant tread of a stranger's steps; the haughty steps of Tonthormo, from the roar of Duvranno's echoing stream. He stood in the hall like a pillar of darkness, on whose top is the red beam of fire: wide rolled his eyes beneath the gloomy arch of his bent brow; as flames in two caves of a rock, overhung with the black pine of the desert. They had rolled on Selâma, and he asked the daughter of Connal. Tonthormo! breaker of shields! thou art a meteor of death in war, whose fiery hair streams on the clouds, and the nations are withered beneath its path. Dwell, Tonthormo! amidst thy hundred hills, and listen to thy torrent's roar; but the soft sigh of the virgins is with the chief of Crono; Hidallan is the dream of Selâma, the

dweller of her secret thoughts. A rushing storm in war, a breeze that sighs over the fallen foe; pleasant are thy words of peace, and thy songs at the mossy brook. Thy smiles are like the moon-beams trembling on the waves. Thy voice is the gale of summer that whispers among the reeds of the lake, and awakens the harp of Moilena with all its lightly-trembling strings. Oh that thy calm light was around me! my soul should not fear the gloomy chief of Duvranno. He came with his stately steps.—My shield is before thee, maid of my love! a wall of shelter from the lightning of swords. They fought. Tonthormó bends in all his pride, before the arm of youth. But a voice was in the breast of Hidallan, shall I slay the lover of Seláma? Seláma dwells in thy dark bosom, shall my steel enter there? Live, thou storm of war! He gave again his sword. But, careless as he strode away, rage arose in the troubled thoughts of the vanquish'd. He mark'd his time, and side-long pierced the heart of the generous son of Semo. His fair hair is spread on the dust, his eyes are bent on the trembling beam of Clutha. Farewel, light of my soul! They are closed in darkness. Feeble wast thou then, my father! and in vain didst thou call for help. Thy gray locks are scatter'd, as a wreath of snow on the top of a wither'd trunk; which the boy brushes away with his staff; and careless singeth as he

walks. Who shall defend thee, my daughter! said the broken voice of Etha's chief. Fair flower of the desert! the tempest shall rush over thee; and thou shalt be low beneath the foot of the savage son of prey. But I will wither, my father, on thy tomb. Weak and alone I dwell amidst my tears, there is no young warrior to lift the spear, no brother of love! Oh that mine arm were strong! I would rush amidst the battle. Seláma has no friend!

But Seláma has a friend, said the kindling soul of Reuthamir. I will fight thy battles, lovely daughter of kings; and the sun of Duvranno shall set in blood. But when I return in peace, and the spirits of thy foes are on my sword, meet me with thy smiles of love, maid of Clutha! with thy slow-rolling eyes. Let the soft sound of thy steps be heard in my halls, that the mother of Reuthamir may rejoice. Whence, she will say, is this beam of the distant land? Thou shalt dwell in her bosom.

My thoughts are with him who is low in the dust, son of Cormac! But lift the spear, thou friend of the unhappy! the light of my soul may return.

He strode in his rattling arms. Tall, in a gloomy forest, stood the surly strength of Duvranno. Gleaming behind the dark trees was his broad

shield; like the moon when it rises in blood, and the dusky clouds sail low, and heavy, athwart its path. Thoughts, like the troubled ocean, rush'd over his soul, and he struck, with his spear, the sounding pine. Starting, he mix'd in battle with the chief of woody Morna. Long was the strife of arms; and the giant sons of the forest trembled at their strokes. At length Tonthormo fell—the sword of Reuthamir wav'd, a blue flame, around him. He bites the ground in rage. His blood is poured, a dark red stream, into Oithona's trembling waves. Joy brighten'd in the soul of Reuthamir; when a young warrior came, with his forward spear. He moved in the light of beauty; but his words were haughty and fierce. Is Tonthormo fallen in blood, the friend of my early years? Die, thou dark-soul'd chief! for never shall Seláma be thine, the maid of his love. Lovely shone her eyes, through tears, in the hall of her grief, when I stood by the chief of Duvranno, in the rising strife of Clutha.

Retire, thou swelling voice of pride! thy spear is light as the taper reed. Pierce the roes of the desert, and call the hunter to the feast of songs, but speak not of the daughter of Connal, son of the feeble arm! Seláma is the love of heroes.

Try thy strength with the feeble arm, said the rising pride of youth. Thou shalt vanish like a

cloud of mist before the sun; when he looks abroad in the power of his brightness, and the storms are rolled away from before his face.

But thou thyself didst fall before Reuthamir, in all thy boasting words. As a tall ash of the mountain, when the tempest takes its green head and lays it level on the plain.

Come from thy secret cave, Seláma! thy foes are silent and dark. Thou dove that hidest in the clefts of the rocks! the storm is over and past. Come from thy rock, Seláma! and give thy white hand to the chief who never fled from the face of glory, in all its terrible brightness.

She gave her hand, but it was trembling and cold, for the spear was deep in her side. Red, beneath her mail, the current of crimson wandered down her white breast, as the track of blood on Cromla's mountains of snow, when the wounded deer slowly crosses the heath, and the hunter's cries are in the breeze. Blest be the spear of Reuthamir! said the faint voice of the lovely, I feel it cold in my heart. Lay me by the son of Semo. Why should I know another love? Raise the tomb of the aged, his thin form shall rejoice, as he sails on a low-hung cloud, and guides the wintry storm. Open your airy halls, spirits of my love!

And have I quench'd the light which was pleasant to my soul? said the chief of Morna.

My steps moved in darkness, why were the words of strife in thy tale? Sorrow, like a cloud, comes over my soul, and shades the joy of mighty deeds. Soft be your rest in the narrow house, children of grief! The breeze in the long whistling grass shall not awaken you. The tempest shall rush over you, and the bulrush bow its head upon your tomb, but silence shall dwell in your habitation; long repose, and the peace of years to come. The voice of the bard shall raise your remembrance in the distant land, and mingle your tale of woe with the murmur of other streams. Often shall the harp send forth a mournful sound, and the tear dwell in the soft eyes of the daughters of Morna.

Such were the words of Reuthamir, while he raised the tombs of the fallen. Sad were his steps towards the towers of his fathers, as musing he cross'd the dark heath of Lena, and struck, at times, the thistle's beard.

AGAINST INCONSISTENCY IN OUR EXPECTATIONS.

"WHAT is more reasonable, than that they who
"take pains for any thing, should get most in
"that particular for which they take pains?
"They have taken pains for power, you for right
"principles; they for riches, you for a proper
"use of the appearances of things: see whether
"they have the advantage of you in that for
"which you have taken pains, and which they
"neglect: If they are in power, and you not,
"why will not you speak the truth to yourself,
"that you do nothing for the sake of power, but
"that they do every thing? No, but since I
"take care to have right principles, it is more
"reasonable that I should have power. Yes,
"in respect to what you take care about, your
"principles. But give up to others the things
"in which they have taken more care than you.
"Else it is just as if, because you have right
"principles, you should think it fit that when

"you shoot an arrow, you should hit the mark
" better than an archer, or that you should forge
" better than a smith."

CARTER'S EPICTETUS.

As most of the unhappiness in the world arises rather from disappointed desires; than from positive evil, it is of the utmost consequence to attain just notions of the laws and order of the universe, that we may not vex ourselves with fruitless wishes, or give way to groundless and unreasonable discontent. The laws of natural philosophy, indeed, are tolerably understood and attended to; and though we may suffer inconveniences, we are seldom disappointed in consequence of them. No man expects to preserve orange-trees in the open air through an English winter; or when he has planted an acorn, to see it become a large oak in a few months. The mind of man naturally yields to necessity; and our wishes soon subside when we see the impossibility of their being gratified. Now, upon an accurate inspection, we shall find, in the moral government of the world, and the order of the intellectual system, laws as determinate fixed and invariable as any in Newton's Principia. The progress of vegetation is not more certain than the growth of habit; nor is the power of attraction more clearly proved than the force

of affection or the influence of example. The man therefore who has well studied the operations of nature in mind as well as matter, will acquire a certain moderation and equity in his claims upon Providence. He never will be disappointed either in himself or others. He will act with precision; and expect that effect and that alone from his efforts, which they are naturally adapted to produce. For want of this, men of merit and integrity often censure the dispositions of Providence for suffering characters they despise to run away with advantages which, they yet know, are purchased by such means as a high and noble spirit could never submit to. If you refuse to pay the price, why expect the purchase? We should consider this world as a great mart of commerce, where fortune exposes to our view various commodities, riches, ease, tranquillity, fame, integrity, knowledge. Every thing is marked at a settled price. Our time, our labour, our ingenuity, is so much ready money which we are to lay out to the best advantage. Examine, compare, choose, reject; but stand to your own judgement; and do not, like children, when you have purchased one thing, repine that you do not possess another which you did not purchase. Such is the force of well-regulated industry, that a steady and vigorous exertion of our faculties, directed to one end, will generally insure success. Would you,

for instance, be rich? Do you think that single point worth the sacrificing every thing else to? You may then be rich. Thousands have become so from the lowest beginnings by toil, and patient diligence, and attention to the minutest articles of expense and profit. But you must give up the pleasures of leisure, of a vacant mind, of a free unsuspicious temper. If you preserve your integrity, it must be a coarse-spun and vulgar honesty. Those high and lofty notions of morals which you brought with you from the schools, must be considerably lowered, and mixed with the baser alloy of a jealous and worldly-minded prudence. You must learn to do hard, if not unjust things; and for the nice embarrassments of a delicate and ingenuous spirit, it is necessary for you to get rid of them as fast as possible. You must shut your heart against the Muses, and be content to feed your understanding with plain, household truths. In short, you must not attempt to enlarge your ideas, or polish your taste, or refine your sentiments; but must keep on in one beaten track, without turning aside either to the right hand or to the left. "But I cannot submit to drudgery like this—I feel a spirit above it." 'Tis well: be above it then; only do not repine that you are not rich.

Is knowledge the pearl of price? That too may be purchased—by steady application, and long

solitary hours of study and reflection. Bestow these, and you shall be wise. "But (says the man of letters) what a hardship is it that many an illiterate fellow who cannot construe the motto of the arms on his coach, shall raise a fortune and make a figure, while I have little more than the common conveniences of life." *Et tibi magna satis!*—Was it in order to raise a fortune that you consumed the sprightly hours of youth in study and retirement? Was it to be rich that you grew pale over the midnight lamp, and distilled the sweetness from the Greek and Roman spring? You have then mistaken your path, and ill employed your industry. "What reward have I then for all my labours?" What reward! A large comprehensive soul, well purged from vulgar fears, and perturbations, and prejudices; able to comprehend and interpret the works of man—of God. A rich, flourishing, cultivated mind, pregnant with inexhaustible stores of entertainment and reflection. A perpetual spring of fresh ideas; and the conscious dignity of superior intelligence. Good heaven! and what reward can you ask besides?

"But is it not some reproach upon the economy of Providence that such a one, who is a mean dirty fellow, should have amassed wealth enough to buy half a nation?" Not in the least. He made himself a mean dirty fellow for that very end.

He has paid his health, his conscience, his liberty for it; and will you envy him his bargain? Will you hang your head and blush in his presence because he outshines you in equipage and show? Lift up your brow with a noble confidence, and say to yourself, I have not these things, it is true; but it is because I have not sought, because I have not desired them; it is because I possess something better. I have chosen my lot. I am content and satisfied.

You are a modest man—You love quiet and independence, and have a delicacy and reserve in your temper which renders it impossible for you to elbow your way in the world, and be the herald of your own merits. Be content then with a modest retirement, with the esteem of your intimate friends, with the praises of a blameless heart, and a delicate ingenuous spirit; but resign the splendid distinctions of the world to those who can better scramble for them.

The man whose tender sensibility of conscience and strict regard to the rules of morality makes him scrupulous and fearful of offending, is often heard to complain of the disadvantages he lies under in every path of honour and profit. "Could I but get over some nice points, and conform to the practice and opinion of those about me, I might stand as fair a chance as others for dignities and preferment." And why can you not?

What hinders you from discarding this troublesome scrupulosity of yours which stands so grievously in your way? If it be a small thing to enjoy a healthful mind, sound at the very core, that does not shrink from the keenest inspection; inward freedom from remorse and perturbation; unsullied whiteness and simplicity of manners; a genuine integrity

"Pure in the last recesses of the mind;"

if you think these advantages an inadequate recompense for what you resign, dismiss your scruples this instant, and be a slave-merchant, a parasite, or—what you please.

"If these be motives weak, break off betimes;"

and as you have not spirit to assert the dignity of virtue, be wise enough not to forgo the emoluments of vice.

I much admire the spirit of the ancient philosophers, in that they never attempted, as our moralists often do, to lower the tone of philosophy, and make it consistent with all the indulgences of indolence and sensuality. They never thought of having the bulk of mankind for their disciples; but kept themselves as distinct as possible from a worldly life. They plainly told men what sacrifices were required, and what advantages they were which might be expected.

"Si virtus hoc una potest dare, fortis omissis
Hoc age deliciis....."

If you would be a philosopher these are the terms. You must do thus and thus: there is no other way. If not, go and be one of the vulgar.

There is no one quality gives so much dignity to a character as consistency of conduct. Even if a man's pursuits be wrong and unjustifiable, yet if they are prosecuted with steadiness and vigour, we cannot withhold our admiration. The most characteristic mark of a great mind is to choose some one important object, and pursue it through life. It was this made Cæsar a great man. His object was ambition; he pursued it steadily, and was always ready to sacrifice to it every interfering passion or inclination.

There is a pretty passage in one of Lucian's dialogues, where Jupiter complains to Cupid that though he has had so many intrigues, he was never sincerely beloved. In order to be loved, says Cupid, you must lay aside your ægis and your thunder-bolts, and you must curl and perfume your hair, and place a garland on your head, and walk with a soft step, and assume a winning obsequious deportment. But, replied Jupiter, I am not willing to resign so much of my dignity. Then, returns Cupid, leave off desiring to be loved—He wanted to be Jupiter and Adonis at the same time.

It must be confessed, that men of genius are of all others most inclined to make these unreason-

able claims. As their relish for enjoyment is strong, their views large and comprehensive, and they feel themselves lifted above the common bulk of mankind, they are apt to slight that natural reward of praise and admiration which is ever largely paid to distinguished abilities; and to expect to be called forth to public notice and favour: without considering that their talents are commonly very unfit for active life; that their eccentricity and turn for speculation disqualifies them for the business of the world, which is best carried on by men of moderate genius; and that society is not obliged to reward any one who is not useful to it. The poets have been a very unreasonable race, and have often complained loudly of the neglect of genius and the ingratitude of the age. The tender and pensive Cowley, and the elegant Shenstone, had their minds tinctured by this discontent; and even the sublime melancholy of Young was too much owing to the stings of disappointed ambition.

The moderation we have been endeavouring to inculcate will likewise prevent much mortification and disgust in our commerce with mankind. As we ought not to wish in ourselves, so neither should we expect in our friends contrary qualifications. Young and sanguine, when we enter the world, and feel our affections drawn forth by any particular excellence in a character, we im-

mediately give it credit for all others; and are beyond measure disgusted when we come to discover, as we soon must discover, the defects in the other side of the balance. But nature is much more frugal than to heap together all manner of shining qualities in one glaring mass. Like a judicious painter she endeavours to preserve a certain unity of style and colouring in her pieces. Models of absolute perfection are only to be met with in romance; where exquisite beauty, and brilliant wit, and profound judgement, and immaculate virtue, are all blended together to adorn some favourite character. As an anatomist knows that the racer cannot have the strength and muscles of the draught-horse; and that winged men, griffins, and mermaids must be mere creatures of the imagination; so the philosopher is sensible that there are combinations of moral qualities which never can take place but in idea. There is a different air and complexion in characters as well as in faces, though perhaps each equally beautiful; and the excellencies of one cannot be transferred to the other. Thus if one man possesses a stoical apathy of soul, acts independent of the opinion of the world, and fulfills every duty with mathematical exactness, you must not expect that man to be greatly influenced by the weakness of pity, or the partialities of friendship: you must not be offended that he does not fly to meet you

after a short absence; or require from him the convivial spirit and honest effusions of a warm, open, susceptible heart. If another is remarkable for a lively active zeal, inflexible integrity, a strong indignation against vice, and freedom in reproving it, he will probably have some little bluntness in his address not altogether suitable to polished life; he will want the winning arts of conversation; he will disgust by a kind of haughtiness and negligence in his manner, and often hurt the delicacy of his acquaintance with harsh and disagreeable truths.

We usually say—that man is a genius, *but* he has some whims and oddities—such a one has a very general knowledge, *but* he is superficial; &c. Now in all such cases we should speak more rationally did we substitute *therefore* for *but*. He is a genius, *therefore* he is whimsical; and the like.

It is the fault of the present age, owing to the freer commerce that different ranks and professions now enjoy with each other, that characters are not marked with sufficient strength: the several classes run too much into one another. We have fewer pedants, it is true, but we have fewer striking originals. Every one is expected to have such a tincture of general knowledge as is incompatible with going deep into any science; and such a conformity to fashionable manners as

checks the free workings of the ruling passion, and gives an insipid sameness to the face of society, under the idea of polish and regularity.

There is a cast of manners peculiar and becoming to each age, sex, and profession; one, therefore, should not throw out illiberal and commonplace censures against another. Each is perfect in its kind. A woman as a woman: a tradesman as a tradesman. We are often hurt by the brutality and sluggish conceptions of the vulgar; not considering that some there must be to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, and that cultivated genius, or even any great refinement and delicacy in their moral feelings, would be a real misfortune to them.

Let us then study the philosophy of the human mind. The man who is master of this science, will know what to expect from every one. From this man, wise advice; from that, cordial sympathy; from another, casual entertainment. The passions and inclinations of others are his tools, which he can use with as much precision as he would the mechanical powers; and he can as readily make allowance for the workings of vanity, or the bias of self-interest in his friends, as for the power of friction, or the irregularities of the needle.

ON MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS.

I HAPPENED the other day to take a solitary walk amongst the venerable ruins of an old abbey. The stillness and solemnity of the place were favourable to thought, and naturally led me to a train of ideas relative to the scene; when, like a good protestant, I began to indulge a secret triumph in the ruin of so many structures which I had always considered as the haunts of ignorance and superstition.

Ye are fallen, said I, ye dark and gloomy mansions of mistaken zeal, where the proud priest and lazy monk fattened upon the riches of the land, and crept like vermin from their cells to spread their poisonous doctrines through the nation, and disturb the peace of kings. Obscure in their origin, but daring and ambitious in their guilt! See how the pure light of heaven is clouded by the dim glass of the arched window, stained with the gaudy colours of monkish tales and legendary fiction; fit emblem how reluctantly they admitted the fairer light of truth amidst these dark recesses, and how much they have debased its genuine

lustre! The low cells, the long and narrow aisles, the gloomy arches, the damp and secret caverns which wind beneath the hollow ground, far from impressing on the mind the idea of the God of truth and love, seem only fit for those dark places of the earth in which are the habitations of cruelty. These massy stones and scattered reliques of the vast edifice, like the large bones and gigantic armour of a once formidable ruffian, produce emotions of mingled dread and exultation. Farewel, ye once venerated seats! enough of you remains, and may it always remain, to remind us from what we have escaped, and make posterity for ever thankful for this fairer age of liberty and light.

Such were for a while my meditations; but it is cruel to insult a fallen enemy, and I gradually fell into a different train of thought. I began to consider whether something might not be advanced in favour of these institutions during the barbarous ages in which they flourished; and though they have been productive of much mischief and superstition, whether they might not have spread the glimmering of a feeble ray of knowledge through that thick night which once involved the western hemisphere.

And where, indeed, could the precious remains of classical learning, and the divine monuments of ancient taste, have been safely lodged amidst

the ravages of that age of ferocity and rapine which succeeded the desolation of the Roman empire, except in sanctuaries like these, consecrated by the superstition of the times beyond their intrinsic merit? The frequency of wars, and the licentious cruelty with which they were conducted, left neither the hamlet of the peasant nor the castle of the baron free from depredation; but the church and monastery generally remained inviolate. There Homer and Aristotle were obliged to shroud their heads from the rage of Gothic ignorance; and there the sacred recor s of divine truth were preserved, like treasure hid in the earth in troublesome times, safe, but unenjoyed. Some of the barbarous nations were converted before their conquests, and most of them soon after their settlement in the countries they over-ran. Those buildings which their new faith taught them to venerate, afforded a shelter for those valuable manuscripts, which must otherwise have been destroyed in the common wreck. At the revival of learning, they were produced from their dormitories. A copy of the pandects of Justinian, that valuable remain of Roman law, which first gave to Europe the idea of a more perfect jurisprudence, and gave men a relish for a new and important study, was discovered in a monastery of Amalphi. Most of the classics were recovered by the same means; and to this it is owing, to

the books and learning preserved in these repositories, that we were not obliged to begin anew, and trace every art by slow and uncertain steps from its first origin. Science, already full-grown and vigorous, awaked as from a trance, shook her pinions, and soon soared to the heights of knowledge.

Nor was she entirely idle during her recess; at least we cannot but confess that what little learning remained in the world was amongst the priests and religious orders. Books, before the invention of paper, and the art of printing, were so dear, that few private persons possessed any. The only libraries were in convents; and the monks were often employed in transcribing manuscripts, which was a very tedious, and at that time a very necessary task. It was frequently enjoined as a penance for some slight offence, or given as an exercise to the younger part of the community. The monks were obliged by their rules to spend some stated hours every day in reading and study; nor was any one to be chosen abbot without a competent share of learning. They were the only historians; and though their accounts be interwoven with many a legendary tale, and darkened by much superstition, still they are better than no histories at all; and we cannot but think ourselves obliged to them for transmitting to us, in any dress, the annals of their country.

They were likewise almost the sole instructors of youth. Towards the end of the tenth century, there were no schools in Europe but the monasteries, and those which belonged to episcopal residences; nor any masters but the Benedictines. It is true, their course of education extended no further than what they called the seven liberal arts, and these were taught in a very dry and uninteresting manner. But this was the genius of the age, and it should not be imputed to them as a reproach that they did not teach well, when no one taught better. We are guilty of great unfairness when we compare the school-men with the philosophers of a more enlightened age: we should contrast them with those of their own times; with a high-constable of France who could not read; with kings who made the sign of the cross in confirmation of their charters, because they could not write their names; with a whole people without the least glimmering of taste or literature. Whatever was their real knowledge, there was a much greater difference between men of learning, and the bulk of the nation at that time, than there is at present; and certainly, some of the disciples of those schools who, though now fallen into disrepute, were revered in their day by the names of the subtle, or the angelic doctors, showed an acuteness and strength of genius, which, if properly directed, would have gone far in philosophy;

and they only failed because their inquiries were not the objects of the human powers. Had they exercised half that acuteness on facts and experiments, they had been truly great men. However, there were not wanting some, even in the darkest ages, whose names will be always remembered with pleasure by the lovers of science. Alcuin, the preceptor of Charlemagne, the first who introduced a taste for polite literature into France, and the chief instrument that prince made use of in his noble endeavours for the encouragement of learning; to whom the universities of Soissons, Tours and Paris owe their origin: the historians, Matthew Paris and William of Malmsbury; the elegant and unfortunate Abelard; and, to crown the rest, the English Franciscan, Roger Bacon.

It may be here observed, that forbidding the vulgar tongue in the offices of devotion, and in reading the Scriptures, though undoubtedly a great corruption in the Christian church, was of infinite service to the interests of learning. When the ecclesiastics had locked up their religion in a foreign tongue, they would take care not to lose the key. This gave an importance to the learned languages; and every scholar could not only read, but wrote and disputed in Latin, which without such a motive would probably have been no more studied than the Chinese. And at a time when the modern languages of Europe were yet un-

formed and barbarous, Latin was of great use as a kind of universal tongue, by which learned men might converse and correspond with each other.

Indeed the monks were almost the only set of men who had leisure or opportunity to pay the least attention to literary subjects. A learned education (and a very little went to that title) was reckoned peculiar to the religious. It was almost esteemed a blemish on the savage and martial character of the gentry, to have any tincture of letters. A man, therefore, of a studious and retired turn, averse to quarrels, and not desirous of the fierce and sanguinary glory of those times, beheld in the cloister a peaceful and honourable sanctuary; where, without the reproach of cowardice, or danger of invasion, he might devote himself to learning, associate with men of his own turn, and have free access to libraries and manuscripts. In this enlightened and polished age, where learning is diffused through every rank, and many a merchant's clerk possesses more real knowledge than half the literati of that æra, we can scarcely conceive how gross an ignorance overpread those times, and how totally all useful learning might have been lost amongst us, had it not been for an order of men, vested with peculiar privileges, and protected by even a superstitious degree of reverence.

Thus the Muses, with their attendant arts, in

strange disguise indeed, and uncouth trappings, took refuge in the peaceful gloom of the convent. Statuary carved a madonna or a crucifix; Painting illuminated a missal; Eloquence made the panegyric of a saint; and History composed a legend. Yet still they breathed, and were ready, at any happier period, to emerge from obscurity with all their native charms and undiminished lustre.

But there were other views in which those who devoted themselves to a monastic life might be supposed useful to society. They were often employed either in cultivating their gardens, or in curious mechanical works; as indeed the nuns are still famous for many elegant and ingenious manufactures. By the constant communication they had with those of their own order, and with their common head at Rome, they maintained some intercourse between nations at a time when travelling was dangerous, and commerce had not, as now, made the most distant parts of the globe familiar to each other: and they kept up a more intimate bond of union amongst learned men of all countries, who would otherwise have been secluded from all knowledge of each other. A monk might travel with more convenience than any one else; his person was safer, and he was sure of meeting with proper accommodations. The intercourse with Rome must have been peculiarly

favourable to these northern nations; as Italy for a long time led the way in every improvement of politeness or literature: and if we imported their superstition, we likewise imported their manufactures, their knowledge, and their taste. Thus Alfred sent for Italian monks, when he wanted to civilise his people, and introduce amongst them some tincture of letters. It may likewise be presumed that they tempered the rigour of monarchy. Indeed they, as well as the sovereigns, endeavoured to enslave the people; but subjection was not likely to be so abject and unlimited where the object of it was divided, and each showed by turns that the other might be opposed. It must have been of service to the cause of liberty to have a set of men, whose laws, privileges, and immunities the most daring kings were afraid to trample on; and this, before a more enlightened spirit of freedom had arisen, might have its effect in preventing the states of Christendom from falling into such entire slavery as the Asiatics.

Such an order would in some degree check the excessive regard paid to birth. A man of mean origin and obscure parentage saw himself excluded from almost every path of secular preferment, and almost treated as a being of an inferior species by the high and haughty spirit of the gentry; but he was at liberty to aspire to the highest dignities of the church; and there have

been many who, like Sextus V., have by their industry and personal merit alone raised themselves to a level with kings.

It should likewise be remembered that many of the orders were charitable institutions; as the *knights of faith and charity* in the thirteenth century, who were associated for the purpose of suppressing those bands of robbers which infested the public roads in France; the *brethren of the order of the redemption*, for redeeming slaves from the Mahometans; the *order of St. Anthony*, first established for the relief of the poor under certain disorders; and the *brethren and sisters of the pious and christian schools*, for educating poor children. These supplied the place of hospitals and other such foundations, which are now established on the broader basis of public benevolence. To bind up the wounds of the stranger, was peculiarly the office of the inhabitants of the convent; and they often shared the charities they received. The exercise of hospitality is still their characteristic, and must have been of particular use formerly, when there were not the conveniences and accommodations for travelling which we now enjoy. The learned stranger was always sure of an agreeable residence amongst them; and as they all understood Latin, they served him for interpreters, and introduced him to a sight of whatever was curious or valuable in the countries

which he visited. They checked the spirit of savage fierceness, to which our warlike ancestors were so prone, with the mildness and sanctity of religious influences; they preserved some respect to law and order, and often decided controversies by means less bloody than the sword, though confessedly more superstitious.

A proof that these institutions had a favourable aspect towards civilisation may be drawn from a late history of Ireland. "Soon after the introduction of christianity into that kingdom," says Dr. Leland, "the monks fixed their habitations in deserts, which they cultivated with their own hands, and rendered the most delightful spots in the kingdom. These deserts became well policed cities; and it is remarkable enough, that to the monks we owe so useful an institution in Ireland as the bringing great numbers together into one civil community. In these cities the monks set up schools, and taught, not only the youth of Ireland, but the neighbouring nations; furnishing them also with books. They became umpires between contending chiefs, and when they could not confine them within the bounds of reason and religion, at least terrified them by denouncing divine vengeance against their excesses."

Let it be considered too, that when the minds of men began to open, some of the most eminent reformers sprung from the bosom of the church,

and even of the convent. It was not the laity who began to think. The ecclesiastics were the first to perceive the errors they had introduced. The church was reformed from within, not from without; and like the silk-worm, when ripened in their cells to maturer vigour and perfection, they pierced the cloud themselves had spun, and within which they had so long been enveloped.

And let not the good protestant be too much startled if I here venture to insinuate, that the monasteries were schools of some high and respectable virtues. Poverty, chastity, and a renunciation of the world, were certainly intended in the first plan of these institutions; and though, from the unavoidable frailty of human nature, they were not always observed, certain it is, that many individuals amongst them have been striking examples of the self-denying virtues: and as the influence they acquired was only built upon the voluntary homage of the mind, it may be presumed such an ascendancy was not originally gained without some species of merit. The fondness for monkery is easily deduced from some of the best principles in the human heart. It was indeed necessity, that in the third century first drove the christians to shelter themselves from the Decian persecution in the solitary deserts of Thebais; but the humour soon spread, and numbers under the name of hermits, or eremites, se-

cluded themselves from the commerce of mankind, choosing the wildest solitudes, living in caves and hollows of the rocks, and subsisting on such roots and herbs as the ground afforded them. About the fourth century they were gathered into communities, and increased with surprising rapidity. It was then that, by a great and sudden revolution, the fury of persecution had ceased, and the governing powers were become friendly to christianity. But the agitation of men's minds did not immediately subside with the storm. The christians had so long experienced the necessity of resigning all the enjoyments of life, and were so detached from every tie which might interfere with the profession of their faith, that upon a more favourable turn of affairs they hardly dared open their minds to pleasurable emotions. They thought the life of a good man must be a continual warfare between mind and body; and having been long used to see ease and safety on the one side, and virtue on the other, no wonder if the association was so strong in their minds, as to suggest the necessity of voluntary mortification, and lead them to inflict those sufferings upon themselves, which they no longer apprehended from others. They had continually experienced the amazing effects of christianity in supporting its followers under hardship, tortures, and death; and they thought little of its influence in regulating the

common behaviour of life, if it produced none of those great exertions they had been used to contemplate. They were struck with the change from heathen licentiousness to the purity of the gospel; and thought they could never be far enough removed from that bondage of the senses which it had just cost them so violent a struggle to escape. The minds of men were working with newly-received opinions, not yet mellowed into a rational faith; and the young converts, astonished at the grandeur and sublimity of the doctrines which then first entered their hearts with irresistible force, thought them worthy to engross their whole attention. The mystic dreams of the Platonist mingled with the enthusiasm of the martyr; and it soon became the prevailing opinion, that silence, solitude, and contemplation, were necessary for the reception of divine truth. Mistaken ideas prevailed of a purity and perfection far superior to the rules of common life, which was only to be attained by those who denied themselves all the indulgences of sense; and thus the ascetic severities of the cloister succeeded in some degree to the philosophic poverty of the Cynic school, and the lofty virtues of the Stoic.

Indeed, it is now the prevailing taste in morals to decry every observance which has the least appearance of rigour; and to insist only on the softer virtues. But let it be remembered, that

self-command and self-denial are as necessary to the practice of benevolence, charity, and compassion, as to any other duty; that it is impossible to live to others without denying ourselves; and that the man who has not learned to curb his appetites and passions is ill qualified for those sacrifices which the friendly affections are continually requiring of him. The man who has that one quality of self-command will find little difficulty in the practice of any other duty; as, on the contrary, he who has it not, though possessed of the gentlest feelings, and most refined sensibilities, will soon find his benevolence sink into a mere companionable easiness of temper, neither useful to others nor happy for himself. A noble enthusiasm is sometimes of use to show how far human nature can go. Though it may not be proper, or desirable, that numbers should seclude themselves from the common duties and ordinary avocations of life, for the austerer lessons of the cloister, yet it is not unuseful that some should push their virtues to even a romantic height; and it is encouraging to reflect in the hour of temptation, that the love of ease, the aversion to pain, every appetite and passion, and even the strongest propensities in our nature, have been controuled; that the empire of the mind over the body has been asserted in its fullest extent; and that there have been men in all ages capable of voluntarily

renouncing all the world offers, voluntarily suffering all it dreads, and living independent, and unconnected with it. Nor was it a small advantage, or ill calculated to support the dignity of science, that a man of learning might be respectable in a coarse gown, a leathern girdle, and barefooted. Cardinal Ximenes preserved the severe simplicity of a convent amidst the pomp and luxury of palaces; and to those who thus thought it becoming in the highest stations to affect the appearance of poverty, the reality surely could not be very dreadful.

There is yet another light in which these institutions may be considered. It is surely not improper to provide a retreat for those who, stained by some deep and enormous crime, wish to expiate by severe and uncommon penitence those offences which render them unworthy of freer commerce with the world. Repentance is never so secure from a relapse as when it breaks off at once from every former connexion, and entering upon a new course of life, bids adieu to every object that might revive the idea of temptations which have once prevailed. In these solemn retreats, the stillness and acknowledged sanctity of the place, with the striking novelty of every thing around them, might have great influence in calming the passions; might break the force of habit, and suddenly induce a new turn of thinking.

There are likewise afflictions so overwhelming to humanity, that they leave no relish in the mind for any thing else than to enjoy its own melancholy in silence and solitude; and to a heart torn with remorse, or oppressed with sorrow, the gloomy severities of La Trappe are really a relief. Retirement is also the favourite wish of age. Many a statesman, and many a warrior, sick of the bustle of that world to which they had devoted the prime of their days, have longed for some quiet cell, where, like Cardinal Wolsey, or Charles the Fifth, they might shroud their gray hairs, and lose sight of the follies with which they had been too much tainted.

Though there is, perhaps, less to plead for immuring beauty in a cloister, and confining that part of the species who are formed to shine in families and sweeten society, to the barren duties and austere discipline of a monastic life, yet circumstances might occur, in which they would, even to a woman, be a welcome refuge. A young female, whom accident or war had deprived of her natural protectors, must, in an age of barbarism, be peculiarly exposed and helpless. A convent offered her an asylum where she might be safe at least, if not happy; and add to the consciousness of unviolated virtue the flattering dreams of angelic purity and perfection. There were orders, as well amongst the women as the

men, instituted for charitable purposes, such as that of the *virgins of love*, or *daughters of mercy*, founded in 1660, for the relief of the sick poor; with others for instructing their children. These must have been peculiarly suited to the softness and compassion of the sex; and to this it is no doubt owing, that still, in catholic countries, ladies of the highest rank often visit the hospitals and houses of the poor; waiting on them with the most tender assiduity, and performing such offices as our protestant ladies would be shocked at the thoughts of. We should also consider, that most of the females who now take the veil are such as have no agreeable prospects in life. Why should not these be allowed to quit a world which will never miss them? It is easier to retire from the public than to support its disregard. The convent is to them a shelter from poverty and neglect. Their little community grows dear to them. The equality which subsists among these sisters of obscurity, the similarity of their fate, the peace, the leisure they enjoy, give rise to the most endearing friendships. Their innocence is shielded by the simplicity of their life from even the idea of ill; and they are flattered by the notion of a voluntary renunciation of pleasures, which, probably, had they continued in the world, they would have had little share in.

After all that can be said, we have reason

enough to rejoice that the superstitions of former times are now fallen into disrepute. What might be a palliative at one time, soon became a crying evil in itself. When the fuller day of science began to dawn, the monkish orders were willing to exclude its brightness, that the dim lamp might still glimmer in their cell. Their growing vices have rendered them justly odious to society, and they seem in a fair way of being for ever abolished. But may we not still hope that the world was better than it would have been without them; and that He, who knows to bring good out of evil, has made them, in their day, subservient to some useful purposes. The corruptions of christianity, which have been accumulating for so many ages, seem to be now gradually clearing away, and some future period may perhaps exhibit our religion in all its native simplicity.

So the pure limpid stream, when foul with stains
Of rushing torrents and descending rains,
Works itself clear, and as it runs refines,
Till by degrees the floating mirror shines;
Reflects each flower that on its borders grows,
And a new heaven in its fair bosom shows.

AN INQUIRY INTO THOSE KINDS OF DISTRESS WHICH EXCITE AGREEABLE SENSATIONS:

WITH A TALE.

It is undoubtedly true, though a phenomenon of the human mind difficult to account for, that the representation of distress frequently gives pleasure; from which general observation many of our modern writers of tragedy and romance seem to have drawn this inference,—that in order to please, they have nothing more to do than to paint distress in natural and striking colours. With this view, they heap together all the afflicting events and dismal accidents their imagination can furnish; and when they have half broke the reader's heart, they expect he should thank them for his agreeable entertainment. An author of this class sits down, pretty much like an inquisitor, to compute how much suffering he can inflict upon the hero of his tale before he makes an end of him; with this difference, indeed, that the in-

quisitor only tortures those who are at least reputed criminals; whereas the writer generally chooses the most excellent character in his piece for the subject of his persecution. The great criterion of excellence is placed in being able to draw tears plentifully; and concluding we shall weep the more, the more the picture is loaded with doleful events, they go on, telling

> ..... of sorrows upon sorrows
> Even to a lamentable length of woe.

A monarch once proposed a reward for the discovery of a new pleasure; but if any one could find out a new torture, or nondescript calamity, he would be more entitled to the applause of those who fabricate books of entertainment.

But the springs of pity require to be touched with a more delicate hand; and it is far from being true that we are agreeably affected by every thing that excites our sympathy. It shall therefore be the business of this essay to distinguish those kinds of distress which are pleasing in the representation from those which are really painful and disgusting.

The view or relation of mere misery can never be pleasing. We have, indeed, a strong sympathy with all kinds of misery; but it is a feeling of pure unmixed pain, similar in kind, though not equal in degree, to what we feel for ourselves on

the like occasions; and never produces that melting sorrow, that thrill of tenderness, to which we give the name of pity. They are two distinct sensations, marked by very different external expression. One causes the nerves to tingle, the flesh to shudder, and the whole countenance to be thrown into strong contractions; the other relaxes the frame, opens the features, and produces tears. When we crush a noxious or loathsome animal, we may sympathize strongly with the pain it suffers, but with far different emotions from the tender sentiment we feel for the dog of Ulysses, who crawled to meet his long-lost master, looked up, and died at his feet. Extreme bodily pain is perhaps the most intense suffering we are capable of, and if the fellow feeling with misery alone was grateful to the mind, the exhibition of a man in a fit of the toothach, or under a chirurgical operation, would have a fine effect in a tragedy. But there must be some other sentiment combined with this kind of instinctive sympathy, before it becomes in any degree pleasing, or produces the sweet emotion of pity. This sentiment is love, esteem, the complacency we take in the contemplation of beauty, of mental or moral excellence, called forth and rendered more interesting by circumstances of pain and danger. Tenderness is, much more properly than sorrow, the spring

of tears; for it affects us in that manner, whether combined with joy or grief; perhaps more in the former case than the latter. And I believe we may venture to assert, that no distress which produces tears is wholly without a mixture of pleasure. When Joseph's brethren were sent to buy corn, if they had perished in the desert by wild beasts, or been reduced (as in the horrid adventures of a Pierre de Vaud) to eat one another, we might have shuddered, but we should not have wept for them. The gush of tears breaks forth when Joseph made himself known to his brethren, and fell on their neck, and kissed them. When Hubert prepares to burn out prince Arthur's eyes, the shocking circumstance, of itself, would only affect us with horror; it is the amiable simplicity of the young prince, and his innocent affection to his intended murderer, that draws our tears, and excites that tender sorrow which we love to feel, and which refines the heart while we do feel it.

We see, therefore, from this view of our internal feelings, that no scenes of misery ought to be exhibited which are not connected with the display of some moral excellence or agreeable quality. If fortitude, power, and strength of mind are called forth, they produce the sublime feelings of wonder and admiration: if the softer qualities

of gentleness, grace, and beauty, they inspire love and pity. The management of these latter emotions is our present object.

And let it be remembered, in the first place, that the misfortunes which excite pity must not be too horrid and overwhelming. The mind is rather stunned than softened by great calamities. They are little circumstances that work most sensibly upon the tender feelings. For this reason, a well-written novel generally draws more tears than a tragedy. The distresses of tragedy are more calculated to amaze and terrify, than to move compassion. Battles, torture and death are in every page. The dignity of the characters, the importance of the events, the pomp of verse and imagery interest the grander passions, and raise the mind to an enthusiasm little favourable to the weak and languid notes of pity. The tragedies of Young are in a fine strain of poetry, and the situations are worked up with great energy; but the pictures are in too deep a shade: all his pieces are full of violent and gloomy passions, and so over-wrought with horror, that instead of awakening any pleasing sensibility, they leave on the mind an impression of sadness mixed with terror. Shakespear is sometimes guilty of presenting scenes too shocking. Such is the trampling out of Gloster's eyes; and such is the whole play of

Titus Andronicus. But Lee, beyond all others, abounds with this kind of images. He delighted in painting the most daring crimes and cruel massacres; and though he has shown himself extremely capable of raising tenderness, he continually checks its course by shocking and disagreeable expressions. His pieces are in the same taste with the pictures of Spagnolet, and there are many scenes in his tragedies which no one can relish who would not look with pleasure on the flaying of St. Bartholomew. The following speech of Marguerite, in the Massacre of Paris, was, I suppose, intended to express the utmost tenderness of affection.

> Die for him! that's too little; I could burn
> Piece-meal away, or bleed to death by drops,
> Be flayed alive, then broke upon the wheel,
> Yet with a smile endure it all for Guise;
> And when let loose from torments, all one wound,
> Run with my mangled arms and crush him dead.

Images like these will never excite the softer passions. We are less moved at the description of an Indian tortured with all the dreadful ingenuity of that savage people, than with the fatal mistake of the lover in the Spectator, who pierced an artery in the arm of his mistress as he was letting her blood. Tragedy and romance writers are likewise apt to make too free with the more violent expressions of passion and distress, by

which means they lose their effect. Thus an ordinary author does not know how to express any strong emotion otherwise than by swoonings or death; so that a person experienced in this kind of reading, when a girl faints away at parting with her lover, or a hero kills himself for the loss of his mistress, considers it as the established etiquette upon such occasions, and turns over the pages with the utmost coolness and unconcern; whereas real sensibility, and a more intimate knowledge of human nature, would have suggested a thousand little touches of grief, which, though slight, are irresistible. We are too gloomy a people. Some of the French novels are remarkable for little affecting incidents, imagined with delicacy, and told with grace. Perhaps they have a better turn than we have for this kind of writing.

A judicious author will never attempt to raise pity by any thing mean or disgusting. As we have already observed, there must be a degree of complacence mixed with our sorrows to produce an agreeable sympathy; nothing, therefore, must be admitted which destroys the grace and dignity of suffering; the imagination must have an amiable figure to dwell upon: there are circumstances so ludicrous or disgusting, that no character can preserve a proper decorum under them, or appear in an agreeable light. Who can read the following description of Polypheme without finding his

compassion entirely destroyed by aversion and loathing?

> ..... His bloody hand
> Snatched two unhappy of my martial band,
> And dashed like dogs against the stony floor,
> The pavement swims with brains and mingled gore;
> Torn limb from limb, he spreads his horrid feast,
> And fierce devours it like a mountain beast;
> He sucks the marrow, and the blood he drains,
> Nor entrails, flesh, nor solid bone remains.

Or that of Scylla,

> In the wide dungeon she devours her food,
> And the flesh trembles while she churns the blood.

Deformity is always disgusting, and the imagination cannot reconcile it with the idea of a favourite character; therefore the poet and romance-writer are fully justified in giving a larger share of beauty to their principal figures than is usually met with in common life. A late genius, indeed, in a whimsical mood, gave us a lady with her nose crushed for the heroine of his story: but the circumstance spoils the picture; and though in the course of the story it is kept a good deal out of sight, whenever it does recur to the imagination we are hurt and disgusted. It was an heroic instance of virtue in the nuns of a certain abbey, who cut off their noses and lips to avoid violation; yet this would make a very bad subject for a poem or a play. Something akin to this is the representation of any thing unnatural; of which

kind is the famous story of the Roman charity, and for this reason I cannot but think it an unpleasing subject for either the pen or the pencil.

Poverty, if truly represented, shocks our nicer feelings; therefore, whenever it is made use of to awaken our compassion, the rags and dirt, the squalid appearance and mean employments incident to that state, must be kept out of sight, and the distress must arise from the idea of depression, and the shock of falling from higher fortunes. We do not pity Belisarius as a poor blind beggar; and a painter would succeed very ill who should sink him to the meanness of that condition. He must let us still discover the conqueror of the Vandals, the general of the imperial armies, or we shall be little interested. Let us look at the picture of the old woman in Otway:

> ..... A wrinkled hag with age grown double,
> Picking dry sticks, and muttering to herself;
> Her eyes with scalding rheum were galled and red;
> Cold palsy shook her head; her hands seemed withered;
> And on her crooked shoulder had she wrapt
> The tattered remnant of an old striped hanging,
> Which served to keep her carcase from the cold;
> So there was nothing of a-piece about her.

Here is the extreme of wretchedness, and instead of melting into pity, we should turn away with disgust, if we were not pleased with it, as we are with a Dutch painting, from its exact imitation of nature. Indeed the author only intended it to

strike horror. But how different are the sentiments we feel for the lovely Belvidera! We see none of those circumstances which render poverty an unamiable thing. When the goods are seized by an execution, our attention is turned to *the piles of massy plate, and all the ancient, most domestic ornaments,* which imply grandeur and consequence; or to such instances of their hard fortune as will lead us to pity them as lovers: we are struck and affected with the general face of ruin; but we are not brought near enough to discern the ugliness of its features. Belvidera ruined, Belvidera deprived of friends, without a home, abandoned to the wide world—we can contemplate with all the pleasing sympathy of pity; but had she been represented as really sunk into low life, had we seen her employed in the most servile offices of poverty, our compassion would have given way to contempt and disgust. Indeed, we may observe in real life, that poverty is only pitied so long as people can keep themselves from the effects of it. When in common language we say *a miserable object,* we mean an object of distress which, if we relieve, we turn away from at the same time. To make pity pleasing, the object of it must not in any view be disagreeable to the imagination. How admirably has the author of Clarissa managed this point! Amidst scenes of suffering which rend the heart, in poverty, in a

prison, under the most shocking outrages, the grace and delicacy of her character never suffers even for a moment: there seems to be a charm about her which prevents her receiving a stain from any thing which happens; and Clarissa, abandoned and undone, is the object not only of complacence, but veneration.

I would likewise observe, that if an author would have us feel a strong degree of compassion, his characters must not be too perfect. The stern fortitude and inflexible resolution of a Cato may command esteem, but does not excite tenderness; and faultless rectitude of conduct, though no rigour be mixed with it, is of too sublime a nature to inspire compassion. Virtue has a kind of self-sufficiency; it stands upon its own basis, and cannot be injured by any violence. It must therefore be mixed with something of helplessness and imperfection, with an excessive sensibility, or a simplicity bordering upon weakness, before it raises, in any great degree, either tenderness or familiar love. If there be a fault in the masterly performance just now mentioned, it is that the character of Clarissa is so inflexibly right, her passions are under such perfect command, and her prudence is so equal to every occasion, that she seems not to need that sympathy we should bestow upon one of a less elevated character; and perhaps we should feel a livelier emotion of ten-

derness for the innocent girl whom Lovelace calls his Rose-bud, but that the story of Clarissa is so worked up by the strength of colouring, and the force of repeated impressions, as to command all our sorrow.

Pity seems too degrading a sentiment to be offered at the shrine of faultless excellence. The sufferings of martyrs are rather beheld with admiration and sympathetic triumph than with tears; and we never feel much for those whom we consider as themselves raised above common feelings.

The last rule I shall insist upon is, that scenes of distress should not be too long continued. All our finer feelings are in a manner momentary, and no art can carry them beyond a certain point, either in intenseness or duration. Constant suffering deadens the heart to tender impressions; as we may observe in sailors and others who are grown callous by a life of continual hardships. It is therefore highly necessary, in a long work, to relieve the mind by scenes of pleasure and gaiety; and I cannot think it so absurd a practice as our modern delicacy has represented it, to intermix wit and fancy with the pathetic, provided care be taken not to check the passions while they are flowing. The transition from a pleasurable state of mind to tender sorrow is not so difficult as we imagine. When the mind is opened by gay and

agreeable scenes, every impression is felt more sensibly. Persons of a lively temper are much more susceptible of that sudden swell of sensibility which occasions tears, than those of a grave and saturnine cast: for this reason women are more easily moved to weeping than men. Those who have touched the springs of pity with the finest hand, have mingled light strokes of pleasantry and mirth in their most pathetic passages. Very different is the conduct of many novel-writers, who, by plunging us into scenes of distress without end or limit, exhaust the powers, and before the conclusion either render us insensible to every thing, or fix a real sadness upon the mind. The uniform style of tragedies is one reason why they affect so little. In our old plays, all the force of language is reserved for the more interesting parts; and in the scenes of common life there is no attempt to rise above common language: whereas we, by that pompous manner and affected solemnity which we think it necessary to preserve through the whole piece, lose the force of an elevated or passionate expression where the occasion really suggests it.

Having thus considered the manner in which fictitious distress must be managed to render it pleasing, let us reflect a little upon the moral tendency of such representations. Much has been said in favour of them, and they are generally

thought to improve the tender and humane feelings; but this, I own, appears to me very dubious. That they exercise sensibility, is true; but sensibility does not increase with exercise. By the constitution of our frame our habits increase, our emotions decrease, by repeated acts; and thus a wise provision is made, that as our compassion grows weaker, its place should be supplied by habitual benevolence. But in these writings our sensibility is strongly called forth without any possibility of exerting itself in virtuous action, and those emotions, which we shall never feel again with equal force, are wasted without advantage. Nothing is more dangerous than to let virtuous impressions of any kind pass through the mind without producing their proper effect. The awakenings of remorse, virtuous shame and indignation, the glow of moral approbation—if they do not lead to action, grow less and less vivid every time they recur, till at length the mind grows absolutely callous. The being affected with a pathetic story is undoubtedly a sign of an amiable disposition, but perhaps no means of increasing it. On the contrary, young people, by a course of this kind of reading, often acquire something of that apathy and indifference which the experience of real life would have given them, without its advantages.

Another reason why plays and romances do not

improve our humanity is, that they lead us to require a certain elegance of manners and delicacy of virtue which is not often found with poverty, ignorance and meanness. The objects of pity in romance are as different from those in real life as our husbandmen from the shepherds of Arcadia; and a girl who will sit weeping the whole night at the delicate distresses of a lady Charlotte, or lady Julia, shall be little moved at the complaint of her neighbour, who, in a homely phrase and vulgar accent, laments to her that she is not able to get bread for her family. Romance-writers likewise make great misfortunes so familiar to our ears, that we have hardly any pity to spare for the common accidents of life: but we ought to remember, that misery has a claim to relief, however we may be disgusted with its appearance; and that we must not fancy ourselves charitable, when we are only pleasing our imagination.

It would perhaps be better, if our romances were more like those of the old stamp, which tended to raise human nature, and inspire a certain grace and dignity of manners of which we have hardly the idea. The high notions of honour, the wild and fanciful spirit of adventure and romantic love, elevated the mind; our novels tend to depress and enfeeble it. Yet there is a species of this kind of writing which must ever afford an exquisite pleasure to persons of taste and sensi-

bility; where noble sentiments are mixed with well-fancied incidents, pathetic touches with dignity and grace, and invention with chaste correctness. Such will ever interest our sweetest passions. I shall conclude this paper with the following tale.

In the happy period of the golden age, when all the celestial inhabitants descended to the earth, and conversed familiarly with mortals, among the most cherished of the heavenly powers were twins, the offspring of Jupiter, Love and Joy. Where they appeared, the flowers sprung up beneath their feet, the sun shone with a brighter radiance, and all nature seemed embellished by their presence. They were inseparable companions, and their growing attachment was favoured by Jupiter, who had decreed that a lasting union should be solemnized between them as soon as they were arrived at maturer years. But in the mean time the sons of men deviated from their native innocence; vice and ruin over-ran the earth with giant strides; and Astrea, with her train of celestial visitants, forsook their polluted abodes. Love alone remained, having been stolen away by Hope, who was his nurse, and conveyed by her to the forests of Arcadia, where he was brought up among the shepherds. But Jupiter assigned

him a different partner, and commanded him to espouse Sorrow, the daughter of Ate. He complied with reluctance; for her features were harsh and disagreeable, her eyes sunk, her forehead contracted into perpetual wrinkles, and her temples were covered with a wreath of cypress and wormwood. From this union sprung a virgin, in whom might be traced a strong resemblance to both her parents; but the sullen and unamiable features of her mother were so mixed and blended with the sweetness of her father, that her countenance, though mournful, was highly pleasing. The maids and shepherds of the neighbouring plains gathered round, and called her Pity. A redbreast was observed to build in the cabin where she was born; and while she was yet an infant, a dove, pursued by a hawk, flew into her bosom. This nymph had a dejected appearance, but so soft and gentle a mien that she was beloved to a degree of enthusiasm. Her voice was low and plaintive, but inexpressibly sweet; and she loved to lie for hours together on the banks of some wild and melancholy stream, singing to her lute. She taught men to weep, for she took a strange delight in tears; and often, when the virgins of the hamlet were assembled at their evening sports, she would steal in amongst them, and captivate their hearts by her tales full of a charming sadness. She wore on her head a garland

composed of her father s myrtles twisted with her mother's cypress.

One day, as she sat musing by the waters of Helicon, her tears by chance fell into the fountain; and ever since, the Muses' spring has retained a strong taste of the infusion. Pity was commanded by Jupiter to follow the steps of her mother through the world, dropping balm into the wounds she made, and binding up the hearts she had broken. She follows with her hair loose, her bosom bare and throbbing, her garments torn by the briars, and her feet bleeding with the roughness of the path. The nymph is mortal, for her mother is so; and when she has fulfilled her destined course upon the earth, they shall both expire together, and Love be again united to Joy, his immortal and long-betrothed bride.

THOUGHTS ON THE DEVOTIONAL TASTE, AND ON SECTS AND ESTABLISHMENTS*.

It is observed by a late most amiable and elegant writer, that religion may be considered in three different views. As a system of opinions, its sole object is truth; and the only faculty that has any thing to do with it is reason, exerted in the freest and most dispassionate inquiry. As a principle regulating our conduct, religion is a habit, and like all other habits, of slow growth, and gaining strength only by repeated exertions. But it may likewise be considered as a taste, an affair of sentiment and feeling, and in this sense it is properly called devotion. Its seat is in the imagination and the passions, and it has its source in that relish for the sublime, the vast, and the beautiful, by which we taste the charms of poetry and other compositions that address our finer feelings; rendered more lively and interesting by a sense of gratitude for personal benefits. It is in a great

* This Essay was first printed in 1775, prefixed to a collection of Devotional Pieces compiled from the Psalms of David.

degree constitutional, and is by no means found in exact proportion to the virtue of a character.

It is with relation to this last view of the subject that the observations in this essay are hazarded: for though, as a rule of life, the authority and salutary effects of religion are pretty universally acknowledged, and though its tenets have been defended with sufficient zeal, its affections languish, the spirit of devotion is certainly at a very low ebb amongst us, and what is surprising, it has fallen, I know not how, into a certain contempt, and is treated with great indifference, amongst many of those who value themselves on the purity of their faith, and who are distinguished by the sweetness of their morals. As the religious affections in a great measure rise and fall with the pulse, and are affected by every thing which acts upon the imagination, they are apt to run into strange excesses; and if directed by a melancholy or enthusiastic faith, their workings are often too strong for a weak head, or a delicate frame; and for this reason they have been almost excluded from religious worship by many persons of real piety. It is the character of the present age to allow little to sentiment, and all the warm and generous emotions are treated as romantic by the supercilious brow of a cold-hearted philosophy. The man of science, with an air of superiority, leaves them to some florid declaimer who professes to work upon the passions of the lower

class, where they are so debased by noise and nonsense, that it is no wonder if they move disgust in those of elegant and better-informed minds.

Yet there is a devotion, generous, liberal, and humane, the child of more exalted feelings than base minds can enter into, which assimilates man to higher natures, and lifts him "above this visible diurnal sphere." Its pleasures are ultimate, and, when early cultivated, continue vivid even in that uncomfortable season of life when some of the passions are extinct, when imagination is dead, and the heart begins to contract within itself. Those who want this taste, want a sense, a part of their nature, and should not presume to judge of feelings to which they must ever be strangers. No one pretends to be a judge in poetry or the fine arts, who has not both a natural and a cultivated relish for them; and shall the narrow-minded children of earth, absorbed in low pursuits, dare to treat as visionary, objects which they have never made themselves acquainted with? Silence on such subjects will better become them. But to vindicate the pleasures of devotion to those who have neither taste nor knowledge about them, is not the present object. It rather deserves our inquiry, what causes have contributed to check the operation of religious impressions amongst those who have steady principles, and are well disposed to virtue.

And, in the first place, there is nothing more

prejudicial to the feelings of a devout heart, than a habit of disputing on religious subjects. Free inquiry is undoubtedly necessary to establish a rational belief; but a disputatious spirit, and fondness for controversy, give the mind a sceptical turn, with an aptness to call in question the most established truths. It is impossible to preserve that deep reverence for the Deity with which we ought to regard him, when all his attributes, and even his very existence, become the subject of familiar debate. Candour demands that a man should allow his opponent an unlimited freedom of speech, and it is not easy in the heat of discourse to avoid falling into an indecent or careless expression; hence those who think seldomer of religious subjects, often treat them with more respect than those whose profession keeps them constantly in their view. A plain man of a serious turn would probably be shocked to hear questions of this nature treated with that ease and negligence with which they are generally discussed by the practised theologian, or the young lively academic ready primed from the schools of logic and metaphysics. As the ear loses its delicacy by being obliged only to hear coarse and vulgar language, so the veneration for religion wears off by hearing it treated with disregard, though we ourselves are employed in defending it; and to this it is owing that many who have

confirmed themselves in the belief of religion, have never been able to recover that strong and affectionate sense of it which they had before they began to inquire, and have wondered to find their devotion grown weaker when their faith was better grounded. Indeed, strong reasoning powers and quick feelings do not often unite in the same person. Men of a scientific turn seldom lay their hearts open to impression. Previously biassed by the love of system, they do indeed attend the offices of religion, but they dare not trust themselves with the preacher, and are continually upon the watch to observe whether every sentiment agrees with their own particular tenets.

The spirit of inquiry is easily distinguished from the spirit of disputation. A state of doubt is not a pleasant state. It is painful, anxious, and distressing beyond most others: it disposes the mind to dejection and modesty. Whoever therefore is so unfortunate as not to have settled his opinions in important points, will proceed in the search of truth with deep humility, unaffected earnestness, and a serious attention to every argument that may be offered, which he will be much rather inclined to revolve in his own mind, than to use as materials for dispute. Even with these dispositions, it is happy for a man when he does not find much to alter in the religious system he has embraced; for if that undergoes a total revo-

lution, his religious feelings are too generally so weakened by the shock, that they hardly recover again their original tone and vigour.

Shall we mention philosophy as an enemy to religion? God forbid! Philosophy,

> Daughter of Heaven, that slow ascending still
> Investigating sure the form of things,
> With radiant finger points to heaven again.

Yet there is a view in which she exerts an influence perhaps rather unfavourable to the fervour of simple piety. Philosophy does indeed enlarge our conceptions of the Deity, and gives us the sublimest ideas of his power and extent of dominion; but it raises him too high for our imaginations to take hold of, and in a great measure destroys that affectionate regard which is felt by the common class of pious christians. When, after contemplating the numerous productions of this earth, the various forms of being, the laws, the mode of their existence, we rise yet higher, and turn our eyes to that magnificent profusion of suns and systems which astronomy pours upon the mind—when we grow acquainted with the majestic order of nature, and those eternal laws which bind the material and intellectual worlds—when we trace the footsteps of creative energy through regions of unmeasured space, and still find new wonders disclosed and pressing upon the view,—we grow giddy with the prospect; the

mind is astonished, confounded at its own insignificance; we think it almost impiety for a worm to lift its head from the dust, and address the Lord of so stupendous a universe; the idea of communion with our Maker shocks us as presumption, and the only feeling the soul is capable of in such a moment is a deep and painful sense of its own abasement. It is true, the same philosophy teaches that the Deity is intimately present through every part of this complicated system, and neglects not any of his works: but this is a truth which is believed without being felt; our imagination cannot here keep pace with our reason, and the sovereign of nature seems ever further removed from us in proportion as we enlarge the bounds of his creation.

Philosophy represents the Deity in too abstracted a manner to engage our affections. A Being without hatred and without fondness, going on in one steady course of even benevolence, neither delighted with praises, nor moved by importunity, does not interest us so much as a character open to the feelings of indignation, the soft relentings of mercy, and the partialities of particular affections. We require some common nature, or at least the appearance of it, on which to build our intercourse. It is also a fault of which philosophers are often guilty, that they dwell too much in generals. Accustomed to reduce every

thing to the operation of general laws, they turn our attention to larger views, attempt to grasp the whole order of the universe, and in the zeal of a systematic spirit seldom leave room for those particular and personal mercies which are the food of gratitude. They trace the great outline of nature, but neglect the colouring which gives warmth and beauty to the piece. As in poetry it is not vague and general description, but a few striking circumstances clearly related and strongly worked up—as in a landscape it is not such a vast extensive range of country as pains the eye to stretch to its limits, but a beautiful, well-defined prospect, which gives the most pleasure; so neither are those unbounded views in which philosophy delights, so much calculated to touch the heart as home views and nearer objects. The philosopher offers up general praises on the altar of universal nature; the devout man, on the altar of his heart, presents his own sighs, his own thanksgivings, his own earnest desires: the former worship is more sublime, the latter more personal and affecting.

We are likewise too scrupulous in our public exercises, and too studious of accuracy. A prayer strictly philosophical must ever be a cold and dry composition. From an over-anxious fear of admitting any expression that is not strictly proper, we are apt to reject all warm and pathetic imagery,

and, in short, every thing that strikes upon the heart and the senses. But it may be said, "If the Deity be indeed so sublime a Being, and if his designs and manner are so infinitely beyond our comprehension, how can a thinking mind join in the addresses of the vulgar, or avoid being overwhelmed with the indistinct vastness of such an idea?" Far be it from me to deny that awe and veneration must ever make a principal part of our regards to the Master of the universe, or to defend that style of indecent familiarity which is yet more shocking than indifference: but let it be considered that we cannot hope to avoid all improprieties in speaking of such a Being; that the most philosophical address we can frame is probably no more free from them than the devotions of the vulgar; that the Scriptures set us an example of accommodating the language of prayer to common conceptions, and making use of figures and modes of expression far from being strictly defensible; and that, upon the whole, it is safer to trust to our genuine feelings, feelings implanted in us by the God of nature, than to any metaphysical subtleties. He has impressed me with the idea of trust and confidence, and my heart flies to him in danger; of mercy to forgive, and I melt before him in penitence; of bounty to bestow, and I ask of him all I want or wish for. I may make use of an inaccurate expression, I may paint

him to my imagination too much in the fashion of humanity; but while my heart is pure, while I depart not from the line of moral duty, the error is not dangerous. Too critical a spirit is the bane of every thing great or pathetic. In our creeds let us be guarded; let us there weigh every syllable; but in compositions addressed to the heart, let us give freer scope to the language of the affections, and the overflowing of a warm and generous disposition.

Another cause which most effectually operates to check devotion, is ridicule. I speak not here of open derision of things sacred; but there is a certain ludicrous style in talking of such subjects, which, without any ill design, does much harm; and perhaps those whose studies or profession lead them to be chiefly conversant with the offices of religion, are most apt to fall into this impropriety; for their ideas being chiefly taken from that source, their common conversation is apt to be tinctured with fanciful allusions to scripture expressions, to prayers, &c., which have all the effect of a parody, and, like parodies, destroy the force of the finest passage, by associating it with something trivial and ridiculous. Of this nature is Swift's well-known jest of "Dearly beloved Roger," which whoever has strong upon his memory, will find it impossible to attend with proper seriousness to that part of the service. We should

take great care to keep clear from all these trivial associations, in whatever we wish to be regarded as venerable.

Another species of ridicule to be avoided, is that kind of sneer often thrown upon those whose hearts are giving way to honest emotion. There is an extreme delicacy in all the finer affections, which makes them shy of observation, and easily checked. Love, wonder, pity, the enthusiasm of poetry, shrink from the notice of even an indifferent eye, and never indulge themselves freely but in solitude, or when heightened by the powerful force of sympathy. Observe an ingenuous youth at a well-wrought tragedy. If all around him are moved, he suffers his tears to flow freely; but if a single eye meets him with a glance of contemptuous indifference, he can no longer enjoy his sorrow; he blushes at having wept, and in a moment his heart is shut up to every impression of tenderness. It is sometimes mentioned as a reproach to protestants, that they are susceptible of a false shame when observed in the exercises of their religion, from which papists are free. But I take this to proceed from the purer nature of our religion; for the less it is made to consist in outward pomp and mechanical worship, and the more it has to do with the finer affections of the heart, the greater will be the reserve and delicacy which attend the expression of its sentiments.

Indeed, ridicule ought to be very sparingly used; for it is an enemy to every thing sublime or tender: the least degree of it, whether well or ill founded, suddenly and instantaneously stops the workings of passion; and those who indulge a talent that way, would do well to consider, that they are rendering themselves for ever incapable of all the higher pleasures either of taste or morals. More especially do these cold pleasantries hurt the minds of youth, by checking that generous expansion of heart to which their open tempers are naturally prone, and producing a vicious shame, through which they are deprived of the enjoyment of heroic sentiments or generous action.

In the next place, let us not be superstitiously afraid of superstition. It shows great ignorance of the human heart, and the springs by which its passions are moved, to neglect taking advantage of the impression which particular circumstances, times and seasons, naturally make upon the mind. The root of all superstition is the principle of the association of ideas, by which, objects naturally indifferent become dear and venerable, through their connexion with interesting ones. It is true, this principle has been much abused: it has given rise to pilgrimages innumerable, worship of relics, and priestly power. But let us not carry our ideas of purity and simplicity so far as to neglect it entirely. Superior natures, it is possible, may be

equally affected with the same truths at all times, and in all places; but we are not so made. Half the pleasures of elegant minds are derived from this source. Even the enjoyments of sense, without it, would lose much of their attraction. Who does not enter into the sentiment of the poet, in that passage so full of nature and truth—

> He that outlives this hour, and comes safe home,
> Shall stand on tiptoe when this day is named,
> And rouse him at the name of Crispian:
> He that outlives this day, and sees old age,
> Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
> And say, To-morrow is St. Crispian.

But were not the benefits of the victory equally apparent on any other day of the year? Why commemorate the anniversary with such distinguished regard? Those who can ask such a question, have never attended to some of the strongest instincts in our nature. Yet it has lately been the fashion, amongst those who call themselves rational christians, to treat as puerile, all attentions of this nature when relative to religion. They would

> Kiss with pious lips the sacred earth
> Which gave a Hampden or a Russel birth;—

they will visit the banks of Avon with all the devotion of enthusiastic zeal; celebrate the birthday of the hero and the patriot; and yet pour contempt upon the christian who suffers himself

to be warmed by similar circumstances relating to his Master, or the connexion of sentiments of peculiar reverence with times, places, and men which have been appropriated to the service of religion. A wise preacher will not, from a fastidious refinement, disdain to affect his hearers from the season of the year, the anniversary of a national blessing, a remarkable escape from danger, or, in short, any incident that is sufficiently guarded, and far enough removed from what is trivial, to be out of danger of becoming ludicrous.

It will not be amiss to mention here, a reproach which has been cast upon devotional writers,—that they are apt to run into the language of love. Perhaps the charge would be full as just, had they said that Love borrows the language of Devotion; for the votaries of that passion are fond of using those exaggerated expressions, which can suit nothing below Divinity; and you can hardly address the greatest of all beings in a strain of more profound adoration, than the lover uses to the object of his attachment. But the truth is, devotion does in no small degree resemble that fanciful and elevated kind of love which depends not on the senses. Nor is the likeness to be wondered at, since both have their source in the love of beauty and excellence. Both are exceeding prone to superstition, and apt to run into romantic excesses. Both are nourished by

poetry and music, and felt with the greatest fervour in the warmer climates. Both carry the mind out of itself, and powerfully refine the affections from every thing gross, low, and selfish.

But it is time to retire; we are treading upon enchanted ground, and shall be suspected by many of travelling towards the regions of chivalry and old romance. And were it so, many a fair majestic idea might be gathered from those forgotten walks, which would well answer the trouble of transplanting. It must however be owned, that very improper language has formerly been used on these subjects; but there cannot be any great danger of such excesses, where the mind is guarded by a rational faith, and the social affections have full scope in the free commerce and legitimate connexions of society.

Having thus considered the various causes which contribute to deaden the feelings of devotion, it may not be foreign to the subject to inquire in what manner they are affected by the different modes of religion. I speak not of opinions; for these have much less influence upon the heart, than the circumstances which attend particular persuasions. A sect may only differ from an establishment, as one absurd opinion differs from another: but there is a character and cast of manners belonging to each, which will be perfectly distinct; and of a sect, the character

will vary as it is a rising or a declining sect, persecuted or at ease. Yet while divines have wearied the world with canvassing contrary doctrines and jarring articles of faith, the philosopher has not considered, as the subject deserved, what situation was most favourable to virtue, sentiment, and pure manners. To a philosophic eye, free from prejudice, and accustomed to large views of the great polity carried on in the moral world, perhaps varying and opposite forms may appear proper, and well calculated for their respective ends; and he will neither wish entirely to destroy the old, nor wholly to crush the new.

The great line of division between different modes of religion, is formed by establishments and sects. In an infant sect, which is always in some degree a persecuted one, the strong union and entire affection of its followers, the sacrifices they make to principle, the force of novelty, and the amazing power of sympathy, all contribute to cherish devotion. It rises even to passion, and absorbs every other sentiment. Severity of manners imposes respect; and the earnestness of the new proselytes renders them insensible to injury, or even to ridicule. A strain of eloquence, often coarse indeed, but strong and persuasive, works like leaven in the heart of the people. In this state, all outward helps are superfluous, the living spirit of devotion is amongst them, the world

sinks away to nothing before it, and every object but one is annihilated. The social principle mixes with the flame, and renders it more intense; strong parties are formed, and friends or lovers are not more closely connected than the members of these little communities.

It is this kind of devotion, a devotion which those of more settled and peaceable times can only guess at, which made amends to the first christians for all they resigned, and all they suffered: this draws the martyr to a willing death, and enables the confessor to endure a voluntary poverty. But this stage cannot last long: the heat of persecution abates, and the fervour of zeal feels a proportional decay. Now comes on the period of reasoning and examination. The principles which have produced such mighty effects on the minds of men, acquire an importance, and become objects of the public attention. Opinions are canvassed. Those who before bore testimony to their religion only by patient suffering, now defend it with argument; and all the keenness of polemical disquisition is awakened on either side. The fair and generous idea of religious liberty, which never originates in the breast of a triumphant party, now begins to unfold itself. To vindicate these rights, and explain these principles, learning, which in the former state was despised, is assiduously cultivated by the sectaries; their minds become en-

lightened, and a large portion of knowledge, especially religious knowledge, is diffused through their whole body. Their manners are less austere, without having as yet lost any thing of their original purity. Their ministers gain respect as writers, and their pulpit discourses are studied and judicious. The most unfavourable circumstance of this æra is, that those who dissent, are very apt to acquire a critical and disputatious spirit; for, being continually called upon to defend doctrines in which they differ from the generality, their attention is early turned to the argumentative part of religion; and hence we see that sermons, which afford food for this taste, are with them thought of more importance than prayer and praise, though these latter are undoubtedly the more genuine and indispensible parts of public worship.

This then is the second period: the third approaches fast; men grow tired of a controversy which becomes insipid from being exhausted; persecution has not only ceased, it begins to be forgotten; and from the absence of opposition in either kind, springs a fatal and spiritless indifference. That sobriety, industry, and abstinence from fashionable pleasures, which distinguished the fathers, has made the sons wealthy; and, eager to enjoy their riches, they long to mix with that world, à separation from which was the best

guard to their virtues. A secret shame creeps in upon them, when they acknowledge their relation to a disesteemed sect; they therefore endeavour to file off its peculiarities, but in so doing they destroy its very being... Connexions with the establishment, whether of intimacy, business, or relationship, which formerly, from their superior zeal, turned to the advantage of the sect, now operate against it. Yet these connexions are formed more frequently than ever; and those who a little before, soured by the memory of recent suffering, betrayed perhaps an aversion from having any thing in common with the church, now affect to come as near it as possible; and, like a little boat that takes a large vessel in tow, the sure consequence is, the being drawn into its vortex. They aim at elegance and show in their places of worship, the appearance of their preachers, &c., and thus impoliticly awaken a taste it is impossible they should ever gratify. They have worn off many forbidding singularities, and are grown more amiable and pleasing. But those singularities were of use: they set a mark upon them, they pointed them out to the world, and thus obliged persons so distinguished to exemplary strictness. No longer obnoxious to the world, they are open to all the seductions of it. Their minister, that respectable character which once inspired reverence and affectionate esteem,

their teacher and their guide, is now dwindled into the mere leader of the public devotions; or, lower yet, a person hired to entertain them every week with an elegant discourse. In proportion as his importance decreases, his salary sits heavy on the people; and he feels himself depressed by that most cruel of all mortifications to a generous mind, the consciousness of being a burden upon those from whom he derives his scanty support. Unhappily, amidst this change of manners, there are forms of strictness, and a set of phrases introduced in their first enthusiasm, which still subsist: these they are ashamed to use, and know not how to decline; and their behaviour, in consequence of them, is awkward and irresolute. Those who have set out with the largest share of mysticism and flighty zeal, find themselves particularly embarrassed by this circumstance.

When things are come to this crisis, their tendency is evident: and though the interest and name of a sect may be kept up for a time by the generosity of former ages, the abilities of particular men, or that reluctance which keeps a generous mind from breaking old connexions; it must, in a short course of years, melt away into the establishment, the womb and the grave of all other modes of religion.

An establishment affects the mind by splendid buildings, music, the mysterious pomp of ancient

ceremonies; by the sacredness of peculiar orders, habits, and titles; by its secular importance; and by connecting with religion, ideas of order, dignity, and antiquity. It speaks to the heart through the imagination and the senses; and though it never can raise devotion so high as we have described it in a beginning sect, it will preserve it from ever sinking into contempt. As to a woman in the glow of health and beauty the most careless dress is the most becoming, but when the freshness of youth is worn off, greater attention is necessary, and rich ornaments are required to throw an air of dignity round her persón; so while a sect retains its first plainness, simplicity and affectionate zeal, it wants nothing an establishment could give; but that once declined, the latter becomes far more respectable. The faults of an establishment grow venerable from length of time; the improvements of a sect appear whimsical from their novelty. Ancient families, fond of rank, and of that order which secures it to them, are on the side of the former. Traders incline to the latter; and so do generally men of genius, as it favours their originality of thinking. An establishment leans to superstition, a sect to enthusiasm; the one is a more dangerous and violent excess, the other more fatally debilitates the powers of the mind; the one is a deeper colouring, the other a more lasting dye; but the

coldness and languor of a declining sect produces scepticism. Indeed, a sect is never stationary, as it depends entirely on passions and opinions; though it often attains excellence, it never rests in it, but is always in danger of one extreme or the other; whereas an old establishment, whatever else it may want, possesses the grandeur arising from stability.

We learn to respect whatever respects itself; and are easily led to think that system requires no alteration, which never admits of any. It is this circumstance, more than any other, which gives a dignity to that accumulated mass of error, the church of Rome. A fabric which has weathered many successive ages, though the architecture be rude, the parts disproportionate, and overloaded with ornament, strikes us with a sort of admiration, merely from its having held so long together.

The minister of a sect, and of an establishment, is upon a very different footing. The former is like the popular leader of an army; he is obeyed with enthusiasm while he is obeyed at all; but his influence depends on opinion, and is entirely personal: the latter resembles a general appointed by the monarch; he has soldiers less warmly devoted to him, but more steady, and better disciplined. The dissenting teacher is nothing if he

have not the spirit of a martyr; and is the scorn of the world, if he be not above the world. The clergyman, possessed of power and affluence, and for that reason chosen from among the better ranks of people, is respected as a gentleman, though not venerated as an apostle; and as his profession generally obliges him to decent manners, his order is considered as a more regular and civilized class of men than their fellow-subjects of the same rank. The dissenting teacher, separated from the people, but not raised above them, invested with no power, entitled to no emoluments, if he cannot acquire for himself authority, must feel the bitterness of dependence. The ministers of the former denomination cannot fall, but in some violent convulsion of the state: those of the latter, when indifference and mutual neglect begin to succeed to that close union which once subsisted between them and their followers, lose their former influence without resource; the dignity and weight of their office is gone for ever; they feel the insignificancy of their pretensions, their spirits sink, and, except they take refuge in some collateral pursuit, and stand candidates for literary fame, they slide into an ambiguous and undecided character; their time is too often sacrificed to frivolous compliances; their manners lose their austerity, without having proportionally gained in elegance; the

world does not acknowledge them, for they are not of the world; it cannot esteem them, for they are not superior to the world.

Upon the whole, then, it should seem, that the strictness of a sect (and it can only be respectable by being strict) is calculated for a few finer spirits, who make religion their chief object. As to the much larger number, on whom she has only an imperfect influence, making them decent if not virtuous, and meliorating the heart without greatly changing it; for all these the genius of an establishment is more eligible, and better fitted to cherish that moderate devotion of which alone they are capable. All those who have not strength of mind to think for themselves, who would live to virtue without denying the world, who wish much to be religious, but more to be genteel, naturally flow into the establishment. If it offered no motives to their minds, but such as are perfectly pure and spiritual, their devotion would not for that be more exalted, it would die away to nothing; and it is better their minds should receive only a tincture of religion, than be wholly without it. Those too, whose passions are regular and equable, and who do not aim at abstracted virtues, are commonly placed to most advantage within the pale of the national faith.

All the greater exertions of the mind,—spirit to reform, fortitude and constancy to suffer,—can be

expected only from those who, forsaking the common road, are exercised in a peculiar course of moral discipline: but it should be remembered, that these exertions cannot be expected from every character, nor on every occasion. Indeed, religion is a sentiment which takes such strong hold on all the most powerful principles of our nature, that it may easily be carried to excess. The Deity never meant our regards to him should engross the mind: that indifference to sensible objects, which many moralists preach, is not perhaps desirable, except where the mind is raised above its natural tone, and extraordinary situations call forth extraordinary virtues.

If the peculiar advantages of a sect were well understood, its followers would not be impatient of those moderate restraints which do not rise to persecution, nor affect any of their more material interests: for, do they not bind them closer to each other, cherish zeal, and keep up the love of liberty? What is the language of such restraints? Do they not say, with a prevailing voice, Let the timorous and the worldly depart; no one shall be of this persuasion, who is not sincere, disinterested, conscientious. It is notwithstanding proper, that men should be sensible of all their rights, assert them boldly, and protest against every infringement; for it may be of advantage to bear what yet it is unjustifiable in others to inflict.

Neither would dissenters, if they attended to their real interests, be so ambitious as they generally are, of rich converts. Such converts only accelerate their decline; they relax their discipline, and they acquire an influence very pernicious in societies which ought to breathe nothing but the spirit of equality.

Sects are always strict in proportion to the corruption of establishments and the licentiousness of the times, and they are useful in the same proportion. Thus the austere lives of the primitive christians counterbalanced the vices of that abandoned period; and thus the puritans in the reign of Charles the Second seasoned with a wholesome severity the profligacy of public manners. They were less amiable than their descendants of the present day; but to be amiable was not the object: they were of public utility; and their scrupulous sanctity (carried to excess, themselves only considered), like a powerful antiseptic, opposed the contagion breathed from a most dissolute court. In like manner, that sect, one of whose most striking characteristics is a beautiful simplicity of dialect, served to check that strain of servile flattery and Gothic compliment so prevalent in the same period, and to keep up some idea of that manly plainness with which one human being ought to address another.

Thus have we seen that different modes of reli-

gion, though they bear little good-will to each other, are nevertheless mutually useful. Perhaps there is not an establishment so corrupt, as not to make the gross of mankind better than they would be without it. Perhaps there is not a sect so eccentric, but that it has set some one truth in the strongest light, or carried some one virtue, before neglected, to its utmost height, or loosened some obstinate and long-rooted prejudice. They answer their end; they die away; others spring up, and take their place. So the purer part of the element, continually drawn off from the mighty mass of waters, forms rivers, which, running in various directions, fertilize large countries; yet, always tending towards the ocean, every accession to their bulk or grandeur but precipitates their course, and hastens their re-union with the common reservoir from which they were separated.

In the mean time, the devout heart always finds associates suitable to its disposition, and the particular cast of its virtues; while the continual flux and reflux of opinions prevents the active principles from stagnating. There is an analogy between things material and immaterial. As, from some late experiments in philosophy, it has been found that the process of vegetation restores and purifies vitiated air; so does that moral and political ferment which accompanies the growth of new sects, communicate a kind of spirit and elasticity neces-

sary to the vigour and health of the soul, but soon lost amidst the corrupted breath of an indiscriminate multitude.

There remains only to add, lest the preceding view of sects and establishments should in any degree be misapprehended, that it has nothing to do with the *truth* of opinions, and relates only to the influence which the adventitious circumstances attending them may have upon the manners and morals of their followers. It is therefore calculated to teach us candour, but not indifference. Large views of the moral polity of the world may serve to illustrate the providence of God in his different dispensations, but are not made to regulate our own individual conduct, which must conscientiously follow our own opinions and belief. We may see much good in an establishment, the doctrines of which we cannot give our assent to without violating our integrity; we may respect the tendencies of a sect, the tenets of which we utterly disapprove. We may think practices useful which we cannot adopt without hypocrisy. We may think all religions beneficial, and believe of one alone that it is true.

THE CURÉ OF THE BANKS OF THE RHONE.

WRITTEN IN 1791.

A FRIEND of mine, who pretends to have very good information from the Continent, communicated to me the following account: I confess it comes in a shape a little questionable: however, I send it you Mr. Editor, exactly as my friend read it to me, from a private letter which he said he had just received.

"A few days after the bishop of Paris and his vicars had set the example of renouncing their clerical character, a curé from a village on the banks of the Rhone, followed by some of his parishioners with an offering of gold and silver saints, chalices, rich vestments, &c., presented himself at the bar of the House. The sight of the gold put the Convention in a very good humour, and the curé, a thin venerable looking man with gray hairs, was ordered to speak. 'I come,' said he, 'from the village of ——, where the only good building standing (for the chateau has been

pulled down) is a very fine church; my parishioners beg you will take it to make an hospital for the sick and wounded of both parties,—they are both equally our countrymen: the gold and silver, part of which we have brought you, they entreat you will devote to the service of the state, and that you will cast the bells into cannon to drive away its foreign invaders: for myself, I come with great pleasure to resign my letters of ordination, of induction, and every deed and title by which I have been constituted a member of your ecclesiastical polity. Here are the papers; you may burn them if you please in the same fire with the genealogical trees and patents of the nobility. I desire likewise, that you will discontinue my salary. I am still able to support myself by the labour of my hands, and I beg of you to believe that I never felt sincerer joy than I now do in making this renunciation. I have longed to see this day; I see it, and am glad.'

"When the old man had done speaking, the applauses were immoderate. You are an honest man, said they all at once; you are a brave fellow; you do not believe in God;—and the president advanced to give him the fraternal embrace. The curé did not seem greatly elated with these tokens of approbation; he retired back a few steps, and thus resumed his discourse. 'Before you applaud my sentiments, it is fit you

should understand them; perhaps they may not entirely coincide with your own. I rejoice in this day, not because I wish to see religion degraded, but because I wish to see it exalted and purified. By dissolving its alliance with the state, you have given it dignity and independence. You have done it a piece of service which its well-wishers would, perhaps, never have had courage to render it, but which is the only thing wanted to make it appear in its genuine beauty and lustre. Nobody will now say of me, that I am performing the offices of my religion as a trade; he is paid for telling the people such and such things; he is hired to keep up an useless piece of mummery. They cannot now say this, and therefore I feel myself raised in my own esteem, and shall speak to them with a confidence and frankness which, before this, I never durst venture to assume. We resign without reluctance our gold and silver images and embroidered vestments, because we have never found that gold and silver made the heart more pure, or the affections more heavenly: we can also spare our churches, for the heart that wishes to lift itself up to God will never be at a loss for room to do it in: but we cannot spare our religion; because, to tell you the truth, we never had so much occasion for it. I understand that you accuse us priests of having told the people a great many falsehoods. I suspect

this may have been the case; but till this day we have never been allowed to inquire whether the things which we taught them were true or not. You required us formerly to receive them all without proof, and you would have us now reject them all without discrimination; neither of these modes of conduct become philosophers, such as you would be thought to be. I am going to employ myself diligently along with my parishioners to sift the wheat from the chaff, the true from the false: if we are not successful, we shall be at least sincere. I do fear, indeed, that while I wore these vestments which we have brought you, and spoke in that gloomy building which we have given up to you, I told my flock a great many idle stories. I cannot but hope, however, that the errors we have fallen into have not been very material, since the village has been in general sober and good, the peasants are honest, docile and laborious, the husbands love their wives, and the wives their husbands; they are fortunately not too rich to be compassionate, and they have constantly relieved the sick and fugitives of all parties whenever it has lain in their way. I think, therefore, what I have taught them cannot be so very much amiss. You want to extirpate priests; but will you hinder the ignorant from applying for instruction, the unhappy for comfort and hope, the unlearned from looking up

to the learned? If you do not, you will have priests, by whatever name you may order them to be called; but it certainly is not necessary they should wear a particular dress, or be appointed by state-letters of ordination. My letters of ordination are my zeal, my charity, my ardent love for my dear children of the village; if I were more learned, I would add my knowledge, but alas! we all know very little; to man every error is pardonable but want of humility. We have a public walk with a spreading elm at the end of it, and a circle of green round it, with a convenient bench. Here I shall draw together the children as they are playing around me. I shall point to the vines laden with fruit, to the orchards, to the herds of cattle lowing around us, to the distant hills stretching one behind another; and they will ask me, How came all these things? I shall tell them all I know or have heard from wise men who have lived before me; they will be penetrated with love and veneration; they will kneel,—I shall kneel with them; they will not be at my feet, but all of us at the feet of that good Being, whom we shall worship together; and thus they will receive within their tender minds a religion.—The old men will come sometimes from having deposited under the green sod one of their companions, and place themselves by my side; they will look wistfully at the turf, and anxiously

inquire—Is he gone for ever? Shall we soon be like him? Will no morning break over the tomb? When the wicked cease from troubling, will the good cease from doing good? We will talk of these things: I will comfort them. I will tell them of the goodness of God; I will speak to them of a life to come; I will bid them hope for a state of retribution.—In a clear night, when the stars slide over our heads, they will ask what these bright bodies are, and by what rules they rise and set? and we will converse about different forms of being, and distant worlds in the immensity of space, governed by the same laws, till we feel our minds raised from what is groveling, and refined from what is sordid.——You talk of Nature,—this is Nature; and if you could at this moment extinguish religion in the minds of the world, thus would it be kindled again, and thus again excite the curiosity, and interest the feelings of mankind. You have changed our holidays; you have an undoubted right, as our civil governors, so to do; it is very immaterial whether they are kept once in seven days, or once in ten; some, however, you will leave us, and when they occur, I shall tell those who choose to hear me, of the beauty and utility of virtue, of the dignity of right conduct. We shall talk of good men who have lived in the world, and of the doctrines they taught; and if any of them have been per-

secuted, and put to death for their virtue, we shall reverence their memories the more.—I hope in all this there is no harm. There is a book out of which I have sometimes taught my people; it says we are to love those who do us hurt, and to pour oil and wine into the wounds of the stranger. It has enabled my children to bear patiently the spoiling of their goods, and to give up their own interest for the general welfare. I think it cannot be a very bad book. I wish more of it had been read in your town, perhaps you would not have had quite so many assassinations and massacres. In this book we hear of a person called Jesus: some worship him as a God; others, as I am told, say it is wrong to do so;—some teach that he existed from the beginning of ages; others, that he was born of Joseph and Mary. I cannot tell whether these controversies will ever be decided; but in the mean time I think we cannot do otherwise than well, in imitating him; for I learn that he loved the poor, and went about doing good.

"'Fellow citizens, as I travelled hither from my own village, I saw peasants sitting among the smoking ruins of their cottages; rich men and women reduced to miserable poverty; fathers lamenting their children in the bloom and pride of youth: and I said to myself, these people cannot afford to part with their religion. But indeed you cannot take it away; if, contrary to your first

declaration, you choose to try the experiment of persecuting it, you will only make us prize it more, and love it better. Religion, true or false, is so necessary to the mind of man, that even you have begun to make yourselves a new one. You are sowing the seeds of superstition; and in two or three generations your posterity will be worshiping some clumsy idol, with the rites, perhaps, of a bloody Moloch, or a lascivious Thammuz. It was not worth while to have been philosophers and destroyed the images of our saints for this; but let every one choose the religion that pleases him; I and my parishioners are content with ours,—it teaches us to bear the evils your childish or sanguinary decrees have helped to bring upon the country.'"

The curé turned his footsteps homeward, and the Convention looked for some minutes on one another, before they resumed their work of blood.

ZEPHYRUS AND FLORA.

LETTER TO MRS. W ——.

DEAR MADAM,

I THINK it my duty, as well from the high esteem I bear yourself, as from the tender and solicitous affection I feel for your lovely daughter, to inform you of an affair between her and one who has lately been fluttering about her; and for whom, young as she is, she seems to have conceived an extraordinary inclination. Of this you will be convinced, madam, when I assure you she often walks in the fields purposely to meet him; and that on her return I have seen her lips and cheeks improved in their colour by his kisses. It is but within these few weeks that this lover of hers has frequented the environs of Hampstead, for he spent the winter between Lisbon and the Canary Islands; and since his return, which by her has been passionately longed for, her fondness for walking has been much more apparent. Her excursions to the Heath, and her parties to West-end, particularly when she gave me the slip the other day, have

been all planned with the hope of meeting him. Nor can I wonder, indeed, that she admires so pretty a fellow; for he is a light airy being like herself, as playful and as frolicsome. He dresses in a light garment of the thinnest blue silk, fluttering in a thousand different folds, and by way of epaulette two silver wings peeping above his shoulders. His breath is made up of sighs, and perfumed with violets; and his whispers, especially at this season of the year, have a certain prevailing languishment and softness in them, that few can resist. He is fond of caressing the opening roses; and no birthnight beau is more powerfully scented with Mareschal powder than he is with every blossom of the spring. But then he is a general lover, inconstant as he is gay; noted for levity, here today and gone tomorrow, hovering about every beautiful object without attaching himself to one. To fix him would be as difficult as to arrest a sunbeam or to hold a wave between your fingers. Yet I am sorry to say, madam, your daughter absolutely courts this *volage*, and allows him liberties which a prudent mother like yourself must tremble at. He delights to play with her fair hair; sometimes he throws it over her forehead, and almost covers her face with it. Sometimes he takes a single lock, and plays it about her temples; now he

spreads her tresses all over her graceful shoulders; and then lifts them up, or gently parts them, to discover the elegant turn and whiteness of her neck, giving them all the while a thousand kisses. Why need I mention what passes before your eyes, under your own window? It is there that I have seen him busied in wafting her to and fro with an easy motion, when her light form dances through the air in the swing you have lately put up, while he catches her fluttering garment and throws it into every varying fold his fancy dictates. It may be, however, that you may not think these sportive liberties of great consequence to one so young as your daughter is: but I am not without apprehensions that he may some day or other absolutely run away with her. I the rather fear this, as a brother of his, a rough blustering fellow, did once carry off a young lady whose parents had rejected his addresses, as is well known to all who are acquainted with the anecdotes of the family. It is true, he that I speak of has neither the strength nor the impetuosity of his brother; but when I consider the peculiar lightness and airiness of the nymph in question, the enterprise appears to me very practicable.

I have only to add, that his amour with *Flora**

* The name of this young lady was Flora.

is of long standing; and so little is it a secret in the world that every schoolboy is acquainted with it. I doubt not, madam, but you will take the measures your prudence must suggest on this occasion. All my motive in this affair has been to prove with how much zeal and affection I am,

dear madam,

Your devoted and obedient.

ON EVIL:—A RHAPSODY.

O Evil, creature abhorred of God and man!—whence is thy origin? how did so deformed and monstrous a birth gain entrance into the fair creation? Canst thou be from God,—since thou art so opposite to his nature? And if from man,—why was he suffered to produce thee? Weak, unexperienced, unsuspecting man,—why was he permitted to bring such enormous ruin on his own head, and that of all his posterity? Was there no warning voice, no sheltering hand, to save him from such a fall—to save thy image, O God, from pollution? Let us sit down in sad shades, and join the moral poet,

"Who mourns for virtue lost, and ruined man."

What fair, what amiable creatures were our first parents when they came from the hands of their Maker! They knew neither Pain, nor Sin, the sire of Pain; nor Shame, the daughter of Sin. Innocent, happy, and immortal:—so far from practising evil, that they had not even the knowledge

of it. Their passions, nicely balanced, admitted no internal war. A milky innocence in their veins, their eyes beaming with smiles,—the smiles of candour and simplicity,—they were the head of the happy creation, till one fatal moment ruined all:—the garden of paradise is shut for ever; and man (unhappy outcast!)—exposed to the war of elements without and passions within; his peace broken, his heart torn by the conflict of jarring emotions; his life worn away by perplexing doubts and heart-withering care,—moistens his daily bread with tears: and after struggling a few years in the hard, unequal warfare, he returns to the dust from whence he was taken.

Such is the dark side of the picture.—But let us change the view, and see whether in reality the human race have such great reason to lament the fall of their first progenitor. Whether *virtuous* man now, is not a nobler creature than *sinless* man then?—the pupil of reason, than the child of nature?—the follower of the second, than the offspring of the first Adam? Man in his first state had a mind untainted with crimes; but unformed, uncultivated, void of moral ideas, he could not rise, but by his fall; he could not attain to more perfection, but by moral discipline; he could not know the joys of self-approbation, without being subject to remorse,—of sympathy, without feeling distress. Had he been always innocent,

he had been nothing more than innocent;—had he never known his weakness, he had never acquired strength. Behold him now, fashioned by the hand of culture, and shining through the dark cloud of ruin, guilt and pain, that is spread over him. What a different creature from the former man! He now knows vice, but abhors it; temptation, but resists it; error, but he laments it. His passions were once balanced, they are now subdued; he has tasted good and evil, and he knows to choose the one and refuse the other. Intellectual ideas crowd upon him, and a new world opens within his breast. His nature is raised, refined, exalted: he lives by faith, by devotion, by spiritual communion, by repentance—he, weeping beneath the bitter cross, washes off the stain of sin. The world is beneath his feet; for behold he prayeth, and things unseen become present to his soul. Meek resignation blunts the edge of suffering; and triumphant hope looks beyond all suffering, to glory and to joy. Thus advancing through life, he learns some new lesson at every step,—till by receiving, but still more by conferring, benefits; by bearing, and still further by forgiving, injuries,—his mind is disciplined, his moral sense awakened, his taste for beauty, order and rectitude, unfolded. He becomes endeared to those he has wept and prayed and struggled with through this vale of sin and suf-

fering;—he learns to pity and to love his fellow-partners of mortality; till at length the divine flame of universal charity begins to kindle in his breast. Then is the æra of a new birth; then does he become partaker of a divine nature: sense is mortified, passion is subdued, self is annihilated. And is not this a noble creature? a being worth forming by so expensive and painful a process? a being God may delight in? a faithful well-disciplined soldier, fit to cooperate in any plan, or mingle with any order of rational and moral beings throughout the wide creation? Place him where you will, he has learned to follow, to trust in, the Supreme Being: he has learned humility from his errors, steadiness and watchfulness from his weakness; his virtues depend not now on constitution, but on firm principles and established habits. Is this the feeble being whose infant mind was unable to resist the allurements of forbidden fruit? who so easily listened to the seduction of the tempter? See him now resisting unto blood, superior to principalities and powers, to wicked men and bad angels:—neither terrors nor pleasures can move him. He once believed not the living voice of his Maker; having not seen, he now believes. His gratitude once was faint and languid, though he was surrounded with pleasant things: he now loves God, though overwhelmed with sorrow and pain; trusts

in him, though surrounded with difficulties; hopes even against hope, and prays without ceasing. His hopes now are superior to his joys then. Glorious exchange! from reposing on flowers, to tread upon stars,—from naked purity, to a robe of glory,—from the food which cometh out of the earth, to the bread which cometh down from heaven. For ignorance of ill he hath knowledge of good; for smiles of innocence, tears of rapture; for the bowers of paradise, the gates of heaven. Hadst thou, Adam, never fallen, shepherds and husbandmen only would have sprung from thee;—now patriots, martyrs, confessors, apostles!

DIALOGUE

BETWEEN MADAME COSMOGUNIA AND A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRER OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

JANUARY 1, 1793.

E. I REJOICE, my good madam, to see you. You bear your years extremely well. You really look as fresh and blooming this morning as if you were but just out of your leading-strings; and yet you have—I forget how many centuries upon your shoulders.

C. Do not you know, son, that people of my standing are by no means fond of being too nicely questioned about their years? Besides, my age is a point by no means agreed upon.

E. I thought it was set down in the church register?

C. That is true; but every body does not go by your register. The people who live eastward of us, and have sold tea time out of mind, by the great wall, say I am older by a vast deal; and that long before the time when your people pretend I was born, I had near as much wisdom and learning as I have now.

E. I do not know how that matter might be; one thing I am certain of, that you did not know your *letters* then; and every body knows that these tea-dealers, who are very vain, and want to go higher than any body else for the antiquity of their family, are noted for lying.

C. On the other hand, old *Isaac*, the great chronicler, who was so famous for casting a figure, used to say that the register itself had been altered, and that he could prove I was much younger than you have usually reckoned me to be. It may be so;—for my part, I cannot be supposed to remember so far back. I could not write in my early youth, and it was a long time before I had a pocket-almanack to set down all occurrences in, and the ages of my children, as I do now.

E. Well; your exact age is not so material;—but there is one point which I confess I wish much to ascertain. I have often heard it asserted, that as you increase in years, you grow wiser and better; and that you are at this moment, more candid, more liberal, a better manager of your affairs, and, in short, more amiable in every respect, than ever you were in the whole course of your life; and others,—you will excuse me, madam,—pretend that you are almost in your dotage; that you grow more intolerable every year you live; and that whereas in your childhood you were a sprightly innocent young creature, that

rose with the lark, lay down with the lamb, and thought or said no harm of any one; you are become suspicious, selfish, interested, fond of nothing but indulging your appetites, and continually setting your own children together by the ears for straws. Now I should like to know where the truth lies?

C. As to that, I am, perhaps, too nearly concerned to answer you properly. I will, therefore, only observe, that I do not remember the time when I have not heard exactly the same contradictory assertions.

E. I believe the best way to determine the question will be by facts. Pray be so good as to tell me how you have employed yourself in the different periods of your life; from the earliest time you can remember, for instance?

C. I have a very confused remembrance of living in a pleasant garden full of fruit, and of being turned out because I had not minded the injunctions that were laid upon me. After that, I became so very naughty, that I got a severe ducking, and was in great danger of being drowned.

E. A hopeful beginning, I must allow! Pray what was the first piece of work you recollect being engaged in?

C. I remember setting myself to build a prodigious high house of cards, which I childishly

thought I could raise up to the very skies. I piled them up very high, and at last left off in the middle, and had my tongue slit for being so self-conceited. Afterwards I baked dirt in the sun, and resolved to make something very magnificent, I hardly knew what; so I built a great many mounds in the form of sugar-loaves, very broad at bottom and pointed at top:—they took me a great many years to make, and were fit for no earthly purpose when they were done. They are still to be seen, if you choose to take the trouble of going so far. Travellers call them my *folly*.

E. Pray what studies took your attention when you first began to learn?

C. At first I amused myself, as all children do, with pictures; and drew, or rather attempted to draw, figures of lions and serpents, and men with the heads of animals, and women with fishes' tails; to all which I affixed a meaning, often whimsical enough. Many of these my first scratches are still to be seen upon old walls and stones, and have greatly exercised the ingenuity of the curious to find out what I could possibly mean by them. Afterwards, when I had learned to read, I was wonderfully entertained with stories of giants, griffins, and mermaids; and men and women turned into trees, and horses that spoke, and of an old man that used to eat up his children, till his

wife deceived him by giving him a stone to eat instead of one of them; and of a conjurer that tied up the wind in bags, and——

E. Hold, hold, my good madam! you have given me a very sufficient proof of that propensity to the marvellous which I have always remarked in you. I suppose, however, you soon grew too old for such nursery stories as these.

C. On the contrary, I amused myself with putting them into verse, and had them sung to me on holidays; and, at this very day, I make a point of teaching them to all my children in whose education I take any pains.

E. I think I should rather whip them for employing their time so idly; I hope at least these pretty stories kept you out of mischief?

C. I cannot say they did; I never was without a scratched face, or a bloody nose, at any period I can remember.

E. Very promising dispositions, truly!

C. My amusements were not all so mischievous. I was very fond of star-gazing, and telling fortunes, and trying a thousand tricks for good luck, many of which have made such an impression on my mind, that I remember them even to this day.

E. I hope, however, your reading was not all of the kind you have mentioned?

C. No. It was at some very famous races, which were held every four years for my diver-

sion, and which I always made a point to be at, that a man once came upon the race-ground, and read a history-book aloud to the whole company: there were, to be sure, a number of stories in it not greatly better than those I have been telling you; however, from that time, I began to take to more serious learning, and likewise to reckon and date all my accounts by these races, which, as I told you, I was very fond of.

E. I think you afterwards went to school, and learnt philosophy and mathematics?

C. I did so. I had a great many famous masters.

E. Were you a teachable scholar?

C. One of my masters used always to weep when he saw me; another used always to burst into a fit of laughter. I leave you to guess what they thought of me.

E. Pray what did you do when you were in middle age?—that is usually esteemed the most valuable part of life.

C. I somehow got shut up in a dark cell, where I took a long nap.

E. And after you waked——

C. I fell a-disputing with all my might.

E. What were the subjects that interested you so much?

C. Several.

E. Pray let us have a specimen?

C. Whether the light of Tabor was created or uncreated; whether *one* be a number; whether men should cross themselves with two fingers or with three; whether the creation was finished in six days, because it is the most perfect number; or whether six is the most perfect number, because the creation was finished in six days; whether two and one make three, or only one.

E. And pray what may be your opinion, of the last proposition, particularly?

C. I have by no means made up my mind about it; in another century, perhaps, I may be able to decide upon the point.

E. These debates of yours had one advantage, however; you could not possibly put yourself in a passion on such kind of subjects.

C. There you are very much mistaken. I was constantly in a passion upon one or other of them; and if my opponent did not agree with me, my constant practice was to knock him down, even if it were in the church. I have the happiness of being able to interest myself in the most indifferent questions, as soon as I am contradicted upon it. I can make a very good dispute out of the question, Whether the preference be due to blue or green, in the colour of a jockey's cap; and would desire no better cause of a quarrel than whether a person's name should be spelt with C or with K.

E. These constant disputes must have had a

very bad effect on your younger children. How do you hope ever to have a quiet house?

C. And yet, I do assure you, there is no one point that I have laboured more than that important one of family harmony.

E. Indeed!

C. Yes; for the sake of that order and unanimity, which has always been dear to me, I have constantly insisted that all my children should sneeze and blow their noses at the same time, and in the same manner.

E. May I presume to ask the reason of this injunction?

C. Is it possible you do not see the extreme danger, as well as indecorum, of suffering every one to blow his nose his own way? Could you trust any one with the keys of your offices, who sneezed to the right when other people sneezed to the left; or to the left when they sneezed to the right?

E. I confess I am rather dull in discerning the inconvenience that would ensue:—but pray have you been able to accomplish this desirable uniformity?

C. I acknowledge I have not; and indeed I have met with so much obstinate resistance to this my wise regulation, that, to tell you the truth, I am almost on the point of giving it up. You would hardly believe the perverseness my chil-

dren have shown on the occasion; blowing their noses, locked up in their rooms, or in dark corners about the house, in every possible way; so that, in short, on pretence of colds, tender noses, or want of pocket-handkerchiefs, or one plea or another, I have been obliged to tolerate the uncomplying, very much against my will. However, I contrived to show my disapprobation, at least, of such scandalous irregularities, by never saying *God bless you*, if a person sneezes in the family contrary to established rule.

E. I am glad, at least, you are in this respect got a little nearer to common sense. As you seem to have been of so imperious a disposition, I hope you were not trusted with any mischievous weapons?

C. At first I used to fight with clubs and stones; afterwards with other weapons; but at length I contrived to get at gunpowder, and then I did glorious mischief.

E. Pray, had you never any body who taught you better?

C. Yes; several wise men, from time to time, attempted to mend my manners, and reform me, as they called it.

E. And how did you behave to them?

C. Some I hunted about; some I poisoned; some I contrived to have thrown into prison; some I made bonfires of; others I only laughed

at. It was but the other day that one of them wanted to give me some hints for the better regulation of my family; upon which I pulled his house down: I was often, however, the better for the lesson, though the teacher had seldom the pleasure of seeing it.

E. I have heard it said, you are very partial to your children; that you pamper some, and starve others. Pray who are your favourites?

C. Generally, those who do the most mischief.

E. Had you not once a great favourite called Louis, whom you used to style the immortal man?

C. I had so. I was continually repeating his name: I set up a great number of statues to him, and ordered that every one should pull off his hat to them as he went by.

E. And what is become of them now?

C. The other day, in a fit of spleen, I kicked them all down again.

E. I think I have read, that you were once much under the influence of an old man with a high-crowned hat, and a bunch of keys by his side?

C. It is true. He used to frighten me by setting his arms a-kimbo, and swearing most terribly; besides which, he was always threatening to put me in a dark hole, if I did not do as he would have me. He has conjured many *pence* out of my pocket, I assure you; and he used to

make me believe the strangest stories! But I have now pretty nearly done with him; he dares not speak so big as he used to do: hardly a shoeblack will pull off his hat to him now; it is even as much as he can do to keep his own tight upon his head; nay, I have been assured that the next high wind will certainly blow it off.

E. You must doubtless have made great advances in the art of reasoning, from the various lights and experiments of modern times: pray what was the last philosophical study that engaged your attention?

C. One of the last was a system of quackery, called Animal Magnetism.

E. And what in theology?

C. A system of quackery, called Swedenborgianism.

E. And pray what are you doing at this moment?

C. I am going to turn over quite a new leaf. I am singing *Ça Ira.*

E. I do not know whether you are going to turn over a new leaf or no; but I am sure, from this account, it is high time you should. All I can say is, that if I cannot mend you, I will endeavour to take care you do not spoil me; and one thing more, that I wish you would lay your commands on Miss Burney to write a new novel, and make you laugh.

LETTER OF JOHN BULL*.

SIR,

I HAVE long had the happiness of being married, as I have often said and sworn, to the best of all possible wives; but as this best of all possible wives has a few fancies, which I should be glad she were cured of, I have taken the liberty to lay my case before you.

My wife, sir, has been much admired in her time, and still is, in my eye, a very desirable woman. But you well know, sir, that let wives wear as well as you can suppose, they will be the worse for wear;—and so it is with my dame: and if I were to say that I can see in her neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, I should belie my own eyesight. I like her however, altogether, better than any woman I know; and we should jog on quietly enough together,—but that, of late, she has been pleased to insist upon my declaring, in all companies, that she is absolutely the handsomest woman under the sun; and that none of

* The following *jeu d'esprit* was written about the year 1792, and refers to the unqualified declarations of attachment to the constitution then promulgated by certain associations to prove their loyalty.

my neighbours' wives are fit to hold the candle to her: and there is one 'Squire Edmund, a hectoring bullying fellow, who, they say, is a little cracked (a great favourite with my wife, notwithstanding, ever since he has flattered and spoke her fair; for it is not long ago that he used to be drawing caricatures of her);—he, I say, goes about everywhere, telling people I ought to challenge any one who presumes to assert to the contrary.—"*Cara sposa,*" have I often said to her, "is it not sufficient if I *love* thee best, and that for the best reason, because thou art my wife? I chose thee freely, and am content to be 'to thy faults a little blind;' but to be entirely so, is neither good for thee nor for me."—She lately made me sign a paper, that she was, in all parts, of the exact proportions of the Venus de' Medici; though, Heaven knows! I never measured them together: and that not only there never was a more beautiful creature produced upon God's earth, but that it was utterly impossible for the imagination of man to conceive a more beautiful. I confess I was a good deal ashamed to make such boasts; nevertheless, I complied, for the sake of peace. My wife, moreover, entertains an idea, that every man who sees her is in love with her: and, like *Belise* in the *Femmes Sçavantes,* she is resolved not to give up the point, though the best compliments she has met with of late from her neighbours have

been, "that she looks very well for a woman of her years; that she wears well, considering; that she has fine remains, and that one may easily see she has been a handsome woman in her time." These are speeches, one would think, not very apt to feed her vanity; yet, whenever she hears of a match that is likely to take place, she cannot help fancying the lover was attracted by some remote resemblance to her admired person. "Yes," she will cry on such occasions, "there was a tint of my complexion, which did the business; not so brilliant indeed—something of my majestic look —and an evident imitation of my walk." With all this opinion of herself, my poor wife, especially of late, has been distractedly jealous of me. She is continually teasing me with embarrassing questions; as, "whether I love her as well as I did on my wedding-day; whether I will promise to love her if she should be blind, or decrepid, or out of her wits," &c.—A circumstance has occurred lately, which has increased this jealousy tenfold. My next-door neighbour, you must know, is married again; and ever since that event she watches me as a cat watches a mouse. I cannot look out of the window, or inquire which way the wind sets, but it is in order to admire my neighbour's new wife. She pretends to have found love-letters which have passed between us; and is sure, she says, I design to part with her,

"false-hearted man as I am;" upon which, the other day, she threw herself into violent hysterics, and alarmed the whole family and neighbourhood.

To be sure, the bride did send me a favour, which I wore in my hat, openly; and I do not deny but I may have paid her a few compliments, and written some verses upon her, for she is a showy, fine-spoken woman; but for all that, I would not marry her if I were free tomorrow; for, to tell you the truth, I suspect her to be too much of a termagant for me; and besides, John Bull is not given to change.

My wife has another failing, sir. She is fond of every thing that is old, because it *is* old; and she never will give any reason, except a woman's reason, which, you know, is no reason at all, for any one thing she does. If I presume to hint things might be better after a different fashion, I can get no other answer than "that *it is her way* —that her grandmother and great-grandmother did so before her; and that it is her maxim never to alter the family management." I can scarcely stir about my house, it is so filled with heavy lumbering furniture, half of which is worm-eaten, and of no use but to harbour vermin; but my wife cannot persuade herself to part with any of it, she has such a respect for a fine piece of antiquity: "and then," says she, "old furniture has such a *creditable* look!" "So it might, my dear," says I,

"if it were all of a-piece; but, you know, we are continually buying new; and when one article does not suit with another, you must be sensible nothing can have a worse effect. For instance, now; this dismal old tapestry, how preposterous it looks along with the Indian matting and painted rout-chairs! I wish you would let it come down, it is fit for nothing but for the rats to play at hide-and-seek behind it."—"I would not have it down, my dear," says she, "for the world; it is the story of the Spanish Armada, and was done in the glorious days of Queen Bess." "Then give it a thorough cleaning, at least," returned I.—"If you offer to draw a nail," rejoined she, "there are so many private doors and secret passages made in the wall, you will be blinded with dust and mortar; and, for aught I know, pull an old house over your head." "Let me, at least, give a brushing to the beards of the old Dons," replied I.—"A stroke of the brush would shake them to pieces," insisted my wife; "they are as tender as a cobweb, I tell you, and I positively will not have them meddled with. Nobody, who has any regard for his ancestors, would think of pulling down a venerable set of hangings, made in the glorious days of Queen Elizabeth." Now I care little when a thing was made; the question is, what is it good for? and I know nothing so much useless lumber is good for, but to oblige us to

keep a great many supernumerary servants, at high wages, to look after it.

I have still another grievance, sir. If you are a married man, you may chance to know, that it is often as much as a man can do to manage his wife; but to manage one's wife and mother too is a task too hard for any mortal. Now, my mother, sir, lives with us, and I am sure I have always behaved myself as a dutiful and obedient son; her arm-chair is always set in the best place by the fire; she eats of the best, and drinks of the best; neither do I grudge it her, though the poor children's bellies are often pinched, while she is feasting upon nice bits. But with all this, I have much ado to keep her in good humour. If I stir about a little more briskly than ordinary, my mother has weak nerves, and the noise I make over her head will throw her into fits. If I offer but to dust the books in my study, my mother is afraid some of them should fall upon her head:—indeed, the old lady did get an unlucky blow with one or two of them, which has shaken her not a little. Besides which, she insists, and my wife stands by her in it, that I should consult her in all matters of business; and if I do not, I am cried out against as a graceless atheistical wretch; and a thousand idle reports are raised, that I am going to strip and turn my poor old mother out of doors. Then, my mother is rather particular in her dress; and the children sometimes will be tittering and

making game, when she is displaying some of her old fallals; upon which my wife always insists I should whip them, which I used to do pretty severely, though of late, I confess, I have only hung the rod up over the chimney, *in terrorem;*—on such occasions, my wife never fails to observe, "how becoming it is in one of my mother's age to keep the same fashion in her dress." This, by the way, is not true, for I remember my mother stuck all over with crosses and embroidery, to her very shoes, with strings of beads and such trumpery; yet she says, as well as my wife, that she never changes any thing.

I am, myself, Mr. Editor, an easy, peaceable, plain-spoken man as any that exists; and am a man of little or no expense for my own gratification: yet so it is, that what with the large establishment of servants which we are obliged to keep, and the continual drains upon my purse to supply my extravagant neighbours, I run out every year, and cannot help having many serious thoughts and melancholy forebodings where all this may end. But I apprehend, the first step ought to be for my wife and I to consult together, and make a reform in the family management wherever there may be occasion. If, therefore, you can persuade her to lay aside her groundless jealousies, and talk a little reason, I shall be highly obliged to you, and am your humble servant,

JOHN BULL.

LETTER ON WATERING-PLACES.

SIR,

I AM a country gentleman, and enjoy an estate in Northamptonshire, which formerly enabled its possessors to assume some degree of consequence in the country; but which, for several generations, has been growing less, only because it has not grown bigger. I mean, that though I have not yet been obliged to mortgage my land, or fell my timber, its relative value is every day diminishing by the prodigious influx of wealth, real and artificial, which for some time past has been pouring into this kingdom. Hitherto, however, I have found my income equal to my wants. It has enabled me to inhabit a good house in town for four months of the year, and to reside amongst my tenants and neighbours for the remaining eight with credit and hospitality. I am indeed myself so fond of the country, and so averse in my nature to every thing of hurry and bustle, that, if I consulted only my own taste, I should never feel a wish to leave the shelter of my own oaks in the dreariest season of the year; but I looked upon our annual visit to London as a proper compliance

with the gayer disposition of my wife, and the natural curiosity of the younger part of the family: besides, to say the truth, it had its advantages in avoiding a round of dinners and card-parties, which we must otherwise have engaged in for the winter season, or have been branded with the appellation of unsociable. Our journey gave me an opportunity of furnishing my study with some new books and prints; and my wife of gratifying her neighbours with some ornamental trifles, before their value was sunk by becoming common, or of producing at her table or in her furniture some new-invented refinement of fashionable elegance. Our hall was the first that was lighted by an Argand lamp; and I still remember how we were gratified by the astonishment of our guests, when my wife with an audible voice called to the footman for the tongs to help to the asparagus with. We found it pleasant too to be enabled to talk of capital artists and favourite actors; and I made the better figure in my political debates from having heard the most popular speakers in the House.

Once too, to recruit my wife's spirits after a tedious confinement from a lying-in, we passed a season at Bath. In this manner, therefore, things went on very well in the main, till of late my family have discovered that we lead a very dull kind of life; and that it is impossible to exist with

comfort, or indeed to enjoy a tolerable share of health, without spending good part of every summer at a Watering-place. I held out as long as I could. One may be allowed to resist the plans of dissipation, but the plea of health cannot decently be withstood.

It was soon discovered that my eldest daughter wanted bracing, and my wife had a bilious complaint, against which our family physician declared that sea-bathing would be particularly serviceable. Therefore, though it was my own private opinion that my daughter's nerves might have been as well braced by morning rides upon the Northamptonshire hills as by evening dances in the public rooms, and that my wife's bile would have been greatly lessened by compliance with her husband, I acquiesced; and preparations were made for our journey. These indeed were but slight, for the chief gratification proposed in this scheme was, an entire freedom from care and form. We should find every thing requisite in our lodgings; it was of no consequence whether the rooms we should occupy for a few months in the summer were elegant or not; the simplicity of a country life would be the more enjoyed by the little shifts we should be put to; and all necessaries would be provided in our lodgings. It was not therefore till after we had taken them, that we discovered how far ready-furnished lodg-

ings were from affording every article in the catalogue of necessaries. We did not indeed give them a very scrupulous examination; for the place was so full, that when we arrived late at night, and tired with our journey, all the beds at the inn were taken up, and an easy-chair and a carpet were all the accommodations we could obtain for our repose. The next morning, therefore, we eagerly engaged the first lodgings we found vacant, and have ever since been disputing about the terms, which from the hurry were not sufficiently ascertained; and it is not even yet settled whether the little blue garret, which serves us as a powdering room, is ours of right or by favour. The want of all sorts of conveniences is a constant excuse for the want of all order and neatness, which is so visible in our apartment; and we are continually lamenting that we are obliged to buy things of which we have such plenty at home.

It is my misfortune that I can do nothing without all my little conveniences about me; and in order to write a common letter I must have my study-table to lean my elbows on in sedentary luxury; you will judge therefore how little I am able to employ my leisure, when I tell you, that the only room they have been able to allot for my use is so filled and crowded with my daughters' hat-boxes, bandboxes, wig-boxes, &c., that I can scarcely move about in it, and am at this moment

writing upon a spare trunk for want of a table. I am therefore driven to saunter about with the rest of the party: but instead of the fine clumps of trees and waving fields of corn I have been accustomed to have before my eyes, I see nothing but a naked beach, almost without a tree, exposed by turns to the cutting eastern blast and the glare of a July sun, and covered with a sand equally painful to the eyes and to the feet. The ocean is indeed an object of unspeakable grandeur; but when it has been contemplated in a storm and in a calm, when we have seen the sun rise out of its bosom and the moon silver its extended surface, its variety is exhausted, and the eye begins to require the softer and more interesting scenes of cultivated nature. My family have indeed been persuaded several times to enjoy the sea still more, by engaging in a little sailing-party; but as, unfortunately, Northamptonshire has not afforded them any opportunity of becoming seasoned sailors, these parties of pleasure are always attended with the most dreadful sickness. This likewise I am told is very good for the constitution: it may be so for aught I know; but I confess I am apt to imagine that taking an emetic at home would be equally salutary, and I am sure it would be more decent. Nor can I help imagining that my youngest daughter's lover has been less assiduous since he has contemplated her in the inde-

licate situation of a ship-cabin. I have endeavoured to amuse myself with the company, but without much success; it consists of a few very great people, who make a set by themselves, and think they are entitled, by the freedom of a watering-place, to indulge themselves in all manner of *polissonneries;* and the rest is a motley group of sharpers, merchants' clerks, kept-mistresses, idle men, and nervous women. I have been accustomed to be nice in my choice of acquaintance, especially for my family; but the greater part of our connexions here are such as we should be ashamed to acknowledge anywhere else; and the few we have seen above ourselves will equally disclaim us when we meet in town next winter. As to the settled inhabitants of the place, all who do not get by us view us with dislike, because we raise the price of provisions; and those who do,—which, in one way or other, comprehends all the lower class,—have lost every trace of rural simplicity, and are versed in all arts of low cunning and chicane. The spirit of greediness and rapacity is nowhere so conspicuous as in lodging-houses. At our seat in the country, our domestic concerns went on as by clock-work; a quarter of an hour in a week settled the bills, and few tradesmen wished, and none dared, to practise any imposition where all were known, and the consequence of their different behaviour must have been their being

marked, for life, for encouragement or for distrust. But here the continual fluctuation of company takes away all regard to character: the most respectable and ancient families have no influence any further than as they scatter their ready cash; and neither gratitude nor respect are felt where there is no bond of mutual attachment besides the necessities of the present day. I should be happy if we had only to contend with this spirit during our present excursion, but the effect it has upon servants is most pernicious. Our family used to be remarkable for having its domestics grow grey in its service, but this expedition has already corrupted them; two we have this evening parted with, and the rest have learned so much of the tricks of their station, that we shall be obliged to discharge them as soon as we return home. In the country I had been accustomed to do good to the poor: there are charities here too;—we have joined in a subscription for a crazy poetess, a raffle for the support of a sharper, who passes under the title of a German count, and a benefit-play for a *gentleman* on board the hulks. Unfortunately, to balance these various expenses, this place, which happens to be a great resort of smugglers, affords daily opportunities of making *bargains*. We drink spoiled teas, under the idea of their being cheap; and the little room we have is made less by the reception of cargoes of India

taffetas, shawl-muslins, and real chintzes. All my authority here would be exerted in vain; for (I do not know whether you know it or no) the buying of a bargain is a temptation which it is not in the nature of any woman to resist. I am in hopes, however, the business may receive some little check from an incident which happened a little time since: an acquaintance of ours, returning from Margate, had his carriage seized by the Custom-house officers, on account of a piece of silk which one of his female cousins, without his knowledge, had stowed in it; and it was only released by its being proved that what she had bought with so much satisfaction as contraband, was in reality the home-bred manufacture of Spitalfields.

My family used to be remarkable for regularity in their attendance on public worship; but that too here is numbered amongst the amusements of the place. Lady Huntingdon has a chapel, which sometimes attracts us; and when nothing promises us any particular entertainment, a tea-drinking at the Rooms, or a concert of what is called sacred music, is sufficient to draw us from a church where no one will remark either our absence or our presence. Thus we daily become more lax in our conduct, for want of the salutary restraint imposed upon us by the consciousness of being looked up to as an example by others.

In this manner, sir, has the season passed away. I spend a great deal of money, and make no figure; I am in the country, and see nothing of country simplicity or country occupations; I am in an obscure village, and yet cannot stir out without more observers than if I were walking in St. James's Park; I am cooped up in less room than my own dog-kennel, while my spacious halls are injured by standing empty; and I am paying for tasteless unripe fruit, while my own choice wall-fruit is rotting by bushels under the trees.—In recompense for all this, we have the satisfaction of knowing that we occupy the very rooms which my Lord —— had just quitted; of picking up anecdotes, true or false, of people in high life; and of seizing the ridicule of every character as they pass by us in the moving show-glass of the place,—a pastime which often affords us a good deal of mirth, but which, I confess, I can never join in without reflecting that what is our amusement is theirs likewise. As to the great ostensible object of our excursion,—health; I am afraid we cannot boast of much improvement. We have had a wet and cold summer; and these houses, which are either old tenements vamped up, or new ones slightly run up for the accommodation of bathers during the season, have more contrivances for letting in the cooling breezes than for keeping them out, a circumstance which I should presume sagacious physicians do not always at-

tend to, when they order patients from their own warm, compact, substantial houses, to take the air in country lodgings; of which the best apartments, during the winter, have only been inhabited by the rats, and where the poverty of the landlord prevents him from laying out more in repairs than will serve to give them a showy and attractive appearance. Be that as it may; the rooms we at present inhabit are so pervious to the breeze, that in spite of all the ingenious expedients of listing doors, pasting paper on the inside of cupboards, laying sand-bags, puttying crevices, and condemning closet-doors; it has given me a severe touch of my old rheumatism; and all my family are in one way or other affected with it: my eldest daughter too has got cold with her bathing, though the sea-water never gives any body cold!

In answer to these complaints, I am told by the good company here that I have stayed too long in the same air, and that now I ought to take a trip to the continent, and spend the winter at Nice, which would complete the business. I am entirely of their opinion, that it *would* complete the business, and have therefore taken the liberty of laying my case before you; and am, sir,

Yours, &c.

HENRY HOMELOVE.

ON EDUCATION.

THE other day I paid a visit to a gentleman with whom, though greatly my superior in fortune, I have long been in habits of an easy intimacy. He rose in the world by honourable industry; and married, rather late in life, a lady to whom he had been long attached, and in whom centered the wealth of several expiring families. Their earnest wish for children was not immediately gratified. At length they were made happy by a son, who, from the moment he was born, engrossed all their care and attention.—My friend received me in his library, where I found him busied in turning over books of education, of which he had collected all that were worthy notice, from Xenophon to Locke, and from Locke to Catharine Macauley. As he knows I have been engaged in the business of instruction, he did me the honour to consult me on the subject of his researches, hoping, he said, that, out of all the systems before him, we should be able to form a plan equally complete and comprehensive; it being the determination of both himself and his lady to choose the best that could

be had, and to spare neither pains nor expense in making their child all that was great and good. I gave him my thoughts with the utmost freedom, and after I returned home; threw upon paper the observations which had occurred to me.

The first thing to be considered, with respect to education, is the object of it. This appears to me to have been generally misunderstood. Education, in its largest sense, is a thing of great scope and extent. It includes the whole process by which a human being is formed to be what he is, in habits, principles, and cultivation of every kind. But of this, a very small part is in the power even of the parent himself; a smaller still can be directed by purchased tuition of any kind. You engage for your child masters and tutors at large salaries; and you do well, for they are competent to instruct him: they will give him the means, at least, of acquiring science and accomplishments; but in the business of education, properly so called, they can do little for you. Do you ask, then, what will educate your son? Your example will educate him; your conversation with your friends; the business he sees you transact; the likings and dislikings you express; these will educate him;—the society you live in will educate him; your domestics will educate him; above all, your rank and situation in life, your house, your table, your pleasure-grounds, your hounds

and your stables will educate him. It is not in your power to withdraw him from the continual influence of these things, except you were to withdraw yourself from them also. You speak of *beginning* the education of your son. The moment he was able to form an idea his education was already begun; the education of circumstances—insensible education—which, like insensible perspiration, is of more constant and powerful effect, and of infinitely more consequence to the habit, than that which is direct and apparent. This education goes on at every instant of time; it goes on like time; you can neither stop it nor turn its course. What these have a tendency to make your child, that he will be. Maxims and documents are good precisely till they are tried, and no longer; they will teach him to talk, and nothing more. The *circumstances* in which your son is placed will be even more prevalent than your example; and you have no right to expect him to become what you yourself are, but by the same means. You, that have toiled during youth, to set your son upon higher ground, and to enable him to begin where you left off, do not expect that son to be what you were,—diligent, modest, active, simple in his tastes, fertile in resources. You have put him under quite a different master. Poverty educated you; wealth will educate him. You cannot suppose the result will

be the same. You must not even expect that he will be what you now are; for though relaxed perhaps from the severity of your frugal habits, you still derive advantage from having formed them; and, in your heart, you like plain dinners, and early hours, and old friends, whenever your fortune will permit you to enjoy them. But it will not be so with your son: his tastes will be formed by your present situation, and in no degree by your former one. But I take great care, you will say, to counteract these tendencies, and to bring him up in hardy and simple manners; I know their value, and am resolved that he shall acquire no other. Yes, you make him hardy; that is to say, you take a country-house in a good air, and make him run, well clothed and carefully attended, for, it may be, an hour in a clear frosty winter's day upon your graveled terrace; or perhaps you take the puny shivering infant from his warm bed, and dip him in an icy cold bath,—and you think you have done great matters. And so you have; you have done all you can. But you were suffered to run abroad half the day on a bleak heath, in weather fit and unfit, wading barefoot through dirty ponds, sometimes losing your way benighted, scrambling over hedges, climbing trees, in perils every hour both of life and limb. Your life was of very little consequence to any one; even your parents, encumbered with a nu-

merous family, had little time to indulge the softnesses of affection, or the solicitude of anxiety; and to every one else it was of no consequence at all. It is not possible for you, it would not even be right for you, in your present situation, to pay no more attention to your child than was paid to you. In these mimic experiments of education, there is always something which distinguishes them from reality; some weak part left unfortified, for the arrows of misfortune to find their way into. Achilles was a young nobleman, *dios Achilleus*, and therefore, though he had Chiron for his tutor, there was one foot left undipped. You may throw by Rousseau; your parents practised without having read it; you may read, but imperious circumstances forbid you the practice of it.

You are sensible of the advantages of simplicity of diet; and you make a point of restricting that of your child to the plainest food, for you are resolved that he shall not be nice. But this plain food is of the choicest quality, prepared by your own cook; his fruit is ripened from your walls; his cloth, his glasses, all the accompaniments of the table, are such as are only met with in families of opulence: the very servants who attend him are neat, well dressed, and have a certain air of fashion. You may call this simplicity; but I say he will be nice,—for it is a kind of simplicity which only wealth can attain to, and which will

subject him to be disgusted at all common tables. Besides, he will from time to time partake of those delicacies which your table abounds with; you yourself will give him of them occasionally; you would be unkind if you did not: your servants, if good-natured, will do the same. Do you think you can keep the full stream of luxury running by his lips, and he not taste of it? Vain imagination!

I would not be understood to inveigh against wealth, or against the enjoyments of it; they are real enjoyments, and allied to many elegancies in manners and in taste;—I only wish to prevent unprofitable pains and inconsistent expectations.

You are sensible of the benefit of early rising; and you may, if you please, make it a point that your daughter shall retire with her governess, and your son with his tutor, at the hour when you are preparing to see company. But their sleep, in the first place, will not be so sweet and undisturbed amidst the rattle of carriages, and the glare of tapers glancing through the rooms, as that of the village child in his quiet cottage, protected by silence and darkness; and moreover, you may depend upon it, that as the coercive power of education is laid aside, they will in a few months slide into the habitudes of the rest of the family, whose hours are determined by their company and situation in life. You have, however, done

good, as far as it goes; it is something gained, to defer pernicious habits, if we cannot prevent them.

There is nothing which has so little share in education as direct precept. To be convinced of this, we need only reflect that there is no one point we labour more to establish with children, than that of their speaking truth; and there is not any in which we succeed worse. And why? Because children readily see we have an interest in it. Their speaking truth is used by us as an engine of government—"Tell me, my dear child, when you have broken any thing, and I will not be angry with you." "Thank you for nothing," says the child; "if I prevent you from finding it out, I am sure you will not be angry:" and nine times out of ten he can prevent it. He knows that, in the common intercourses of life, you tell a thousand falsehoods. But these are necessary lies on important occasions.

Your child is the best judge how much occasion he has to tell a lie: he may have as great occasion for it, as you have to conceal a bad piece of news from a sick friend, or to hide your vexation from an unwelcome visitor. That authority which extends its claims over every action, and even every thought, which insists upon an answer to every interrogation, however indiscreet or oppressive to the feelings, will, in young or old,

produce falsehood; or, if in some few instances the deeply imbibed fear of future and unknown punishment should restrain from direct falsehood, it will produce a habit of dissimulation, which is still worse. The child, the slave, or the subject, who, on proper occasions may not say, "I do not choose to tell," will certainly, by the circumstances in which you place him, be driven to have recourse to deceit, even should he not be countenanced by your example.

I do not mean to assert, that sentiments inculcated in education have no influence;—they have much, though not the most: but it is the sentiments we let drop occasionally, the conversation they overhear when playing unnoticed in a corner of the room, which has an effect upon children; and not what is addressed directly to them in the tone of exhortation. If you would know precisely the effect these set discourses have upon your child, be pleased to reflect upon that which a discourse from the pulpit, which you have reason to think merely professional, has upon you. Children have almost an intuitive discernment between the maxims you bring forward for their use, and those by which you direct your own conduct. Be as cunning as you will, they are always more cunning than you. Every child knows whom his father and mother love and see with pleasure, and whom they dislike; for whom they think them-

selves obliged to set out their best plate and china; whom they think it an honour to visit, and upon whom they confer honour by admitting them to their company. "Respect nothing so much as virtue," says Eugenio to his son; "virtue and talents are the only grounds of distinction." The child presently has occasion to inquire why his father pulls off his hat to some people and not to others; he is told, that outward respect must be proportioned to different stations in life. This is a little difficult of comprehension: however, by dint of explanation, he gets over it tolerably well. But he sees his father's house in the bustle and hurry of preparation; common business laid aside, every body in movement, an unusual anxiety to please and to shine. Nobody is at leisure to receive his caresses or attend to his questions; his lessons are interrupted, his hours deranged. At length a guest arrives: it is my Lord ——, whom he has heard you speak of twenty times as one of the most worthless characters upon earth. Your child, Eugenio, has received a lesson of education. Resume, if you will, your systems of morality on the morrow, you will in vain attempt to eradicate it. "You expect company, mamma, must I be dressed today?" "No, it is only good Mrs. Such-a-one." Your child has received a lesson of education, one which he well understands, and will long remember. You have sent your child to a

public school; but to secure his morals against the vice which you too justly apprehend abounds there, you have given him a private tutor, a man of strict morals and religion. He may help him to prepare his tasks; but do you imagine it will be in his power to form his mind? His schoolfellows, the allowance you give him, the manners of the age and of the place, will do that; and not the lectures which he is obliged to hear. If these are different from what you yourself experienced, you must not be surprised to see him gradually recede from the principles, civil and religious, which you hold, and break off from your connexions, and adopt manners different from your own. This is remarkably exemplified amongst those of the Dissenters who have risen to wealth and consequence. I believe it would be difficult to find an instance of families, who for three generations have kept their carriage and continued Dissenters.

Education, it is often observed, is an expensive thing. It is so; but the paying for lessons is the smallest part of the cost. If you would go to the price of having your son a worthy man, you must be so yourself; your friends, your servants, your company must be all of that stamp. Suppose this to be the case, much is done: but there will remain circumstances which perhaps you cannot alter, that will still have their effect. Do you

wish him to love simplicity? Would you be content to lay down your coach, to drop your title? Where is the parent who would do this to educate his son? You carry him to the workshops of artisans, and show him different machines and fabrics, to awaken his ingenuity. The necessity of getting his bread would awaken it much more effectually. The single circumstance of having a fortune to get, or a fortune to spend, will probably operate more strongly upon his mind, not only than your precepts, but even than your example. You wish your child to be modest and unassuming; you are so, perhaps, yourself,—and you pay liberally a preceptor for giving him lessons of humility. You do not perceive, that the very circumstance of having a man of letters and accomplishments retained about his person, for his sole advantage, tends more forcibly to inspire him with an idea of self-consequence, than all the lessons he can give him to repress it. "Why do not you look sad, you rascal?" says the undertaker to his man in the play of The Funeral; "I give you I know not how much money for looking sad, and the more I give you, the gladder I think you are." So will it be with the wealthy heir. The lectures that are given him on condescension and affability, only prove to him upon how much higher ground he stands than those about him; and the very pains that are taken with his moral character will make

him proud, by showing him how much he is the object of attention. You cannot help these things. Your servants, out of respect to you, will bear with his petulance; your company, out of respect to you, will forbear to check his impatience; and you yourself, if he is clever, will repeat his observations.

In the exploded doctrine of sympathies, you are directed, if you have cut your finger, to let that alone, and put your plaster upon the knife. This is very bad doctrine, I must confess, in philosophy; but very good in morals. Is a man luxurious, self-indulgent? do not apply your *physic of the soul* to him, but cure his fortune. Is he haughty? cure his rank, his title. Is he vulgar? cure his company. Is he diffident or mean-spirited? cure his poverty, give him consequence—but these prescriptions go far beyond the family recipes of education.

What then is the result? In the first place, that we should contract our ideas of education, and expect no more from it than it is able to perform. It can give instruction. There will always be an essential difference between a human being cultivated and uncultivated. Education can provide proper instructors in the various arts and sciences, and portion out to the best advantage those precious hours of youth which never will return. It can likewise give, in a great degree,

personal habits; and even if these should afterwards give way under the influence of contrary circumstances, your child will feel the good effects of them, for the later and the less will he go into what is wrong. Let us also be assured, that the business of education, properly so called, is not transferable. You may engage masters to instruct your child in this or the other accomplishment, but you must educate him yourself. You not only ought to do it, but you must do it, whether you intend it or no. As education is a thing necessary for all; for the poor and for the rich, for the illiterate as well as for the learned; Providence has not made it dependent upon systems uncertain, operose, and difficult of investigation. It is not necessary, with Rousseau or Madame Genlis, to devote to the education of one child the talents and the time of a number of grown men; to surround him with an artificial world; and to counteract, by maxims, the natural tendencies of the situation he is placed in in society. Every one has time to educate his child: the poor man educates him while working in his cottage—the man of business while employed in his counting-house.

Do we see a father who is diligent in his profession, domestic in his habits, whose house is the resort of well-informed intelligent people—a mo-

ther whose time is usefully filled, whose attention to her duties secures esteem, and whose amiable manners attract affection? Do not be solicitous, respectable couple, about the moral education of your offspring! do not be uneasy because you cannot surround them with the apparatus of books and systems; or fancy you must retire from the world to devote yourselves to their improvement. In your world they are brought up much better than they could be under any plan of factitious education which you could provide for them: they will imbibe affection from your caresses; taste from your conversation; urbanity from the commerce of your society; and mutual love from your example. Do not regret that you are not rich enough to provide tutors and governors, to watch his steps with sedulous and servile anxiety, and furnish him with maxims it is morally impossible he should act upon when grown up. Do not you see how seldom this over culture produces its effect, and how many shining and excellent characters start up every day, from the bosom of obscurity, with scarcely any care at all?

Are children then to be neglected? Surely not: but having given them the instruction and accomplishments which their situation in life requires, let us reject superfluous solicitude, and trust that their characters will form themselves

from the spontaneous influence of good examples, and circumstances which impel them to useful action.

But the education of your house, important as it is, is only a part of a more comprehensive system. Providence takes your child where you leave him. Providence continues his education upon a larger scale, and by a process which includes means far more efficacious. Has your son entered the world at eighteen, opinionated, haughty, rash, inclined to dissipation? Do not despair; he may yet be cured of these faults, if it pleases Heaven. There are remedies which you could not persuade yourself to use, if they were in your power, and which are specific in cases of this kind. How often do we see the presumptuous, giddy youth, changed into the wise counsellor, the considerate, steady friend! How often the thoughtless, gay girl, into the sober wife, the affectionate mother! Faded beauty, humbled self-consequence, disappointed ambition, loss of fortune,—this is the rough physic provided by Providence to meliorate the temper, to correct the offensive petulancies of youth, and bring out all the energies of the finished character. Afflictions soften the proud; difficulties push forward the ingenious; successful industry gives consequence and credit, and developes a thousand latent good qualities. There is no malady of the mind so in-

veterate, which this education of events is not calculated to cure, if life were long enough; and shall we not hope, that He, in whose hand are all the remedial processes of nature, will renew the discipline in another state, and finish the imperfect man?

States are educated as individuals—by circumstances: the prophet may cry aloud, and spare not; the philosopher may descant on morals; eloquence may exhaust itself in invective against the vices of the age: these vices will certainly follow certain states of poverty or riches, ignorance or high civilisation. But what these gentle alteratives fail of doing, may be accomplished by an unsuccessful war, a loss of trade, or any of those great calamities by which it pleases Providence to speak to a nation in such language as *will* be heard. If, as a nation, we would be cured of pride, it must be by mortification; if of luxury, by a national bankruptcy, perhaps; if of injustice, or the spirit of domination, by a loss of national consequence. In comparison of these strong remedies, a fast, or a sermon, are prescriptions of very little efficacy.

ON PREJUDICE.

It is to speculative people, fond of novel doctrines, and who, by accustoming themselves to make the most fundamental truths the subject of discussion, have divested their minds of that reverence which is generally felt for opinions and practices of long standing, that the world is ever to look for its improvement or reformation. But it is also these speculatists who introduce into it absurdities and errors, more gross than any which have been established by that common consent of numerous individuals, which opinions long acted upon must have required for their basis. For systems of the latter class must at least possess one property,—that of being practicable; and there is likewise a presumption that they are, or at least originally were, useful; whereas the opinions of the speculatist may turn out to be utterly incongruous and eccentric. The speculatist may invent machines which it is impossible to put in action, or which, when put in action, may possess the tremendous power of tearing up society by the roots. Like the chemist, he is not sure in the

moment of projection whether he shall blow up his own dwelling and that of his neighbour, or whether he shall be rewarded with a discovery which will secure the health and prolong the existence of future generations. It becomes us, therefore, to examine with peculiar care those maxims which, under the appearance of following a closer train of reasoning, militate against the usual practices or genuine feelings of mankind. No subject has been more canvassed than education. With regard to that important object, there is a maxim avowed by many sensible people, which seems to me to deserve particular investigation. "Give your child," it is said, "no *prejudices:* let reason be the only foundation of his opinions; where he cannot reason, let him suspend his belief. Let your great care be, that as he grows up he has nothing to unlearn; and never make use of authority in matters of opinion, for authority is no test of truth." The maxim sounds well, and flatters perhaps the secret pride of man, in supposing him more the creature of reason than he really is; but, I suspect, on examination we shall find it exceedingly fallacious. We must first consider what a *prejudice* is. A prejudice is a sentiment in favour or disfavour of any person, practice, or opinion, previous to and independent of examining their merits by reason and investigation. Prejudice is pre-judging; that

is, judging previously to evidence. It is therefore sufficiently apparent, that no *philosophical belief* can be founded on mere prejudice; because it is the business of philosophy to go deep into the nature and properties of things: nor can it be allowable for those to indulge prejudice who aspire to lead the public opinion; those to whom the high office is appointed of sifting truth from error, of canvassing the claims of different systems, of exploding old and introducing new tenets. These must investigate with a kind of audacious boldness every subject that comes before them; these, neither imprest with awe for all that mankind have been taught to reverence, nor swayed by affection for whatever the sympathies of our nature incline us to love, must hold the balance with a severe and steady hand, while they are weighing the doubtful scale of probabilities; and with a stoical apathy of mind, yield their assent to nothing but a preponderancy of evidence. But is this an office for a child? Is it an office for more than one or two men in a century? And is it desirable that a child should grow up without opinions to regulate his conduct, till he is able to form them fairly by the exercise of his own abilities? Such an exercise requires at least the sober period of matured reason: reason not only sharpened by argumentative discussion, but informed by experience. The most sprightly child

can only possess the former; for let it be remembered, that though the reasoning powers put forth pretty early in life, the faculty of using them to effect does not come till much later. The first efforts of a child in reasoning resemble those quick and desultory motions by which he gains the play of his limbs; they show agility and grace, they are pleasing to look at, and necessary for the gradual acquirement of his bodily powers; but his joints must be knit into more firmness, and his movements regulated with more precision, before he is capable of useful labour and manly exertion. A reasoning child is not yet a reasonable being. There is great propriety in the legal phraseology which expresses maturity, not by having arrived at the possession of reason, but of that power, the late result of information, thought, and experience —discretion, which alone teaches, with regard to reason, its powers, its limits, and its use. This the child of the most sprightly parts cannot have; and therefore his attempts at reasoning, whatever acuteness they may show, and how much soever they may please a parent with the early promise of future excellence, are of no account whatever in the sober search after truth. Besides, taking it for granted (which however is utterly impossible) that a youth could be brought up to the age of fifteen or sixteen without prejudice in favour of any opinions whatever, and that he is then set to

examine for himself some important proposition, —how is he to set about it? Who is to recommend books to him? Who is to give him the previous information necessary to comprehend the question? Who is to tell him whether or no it is important? Whoever does these will infallibly lay a bias upon his mind according to the ideas he himself has received upon the subject. Let us suppose the point in debate was the preference between the Roman catholic and protestant modes of religion. Can a youth in a protestant country, born of protestant parents, with access, probably, to hardly a single controversial book on the Roman catholic side of the question,—can such a one study the subject without prejudice? His knowledge of history, if he has such knowledge, must, according to the books he has read, have already given him a prejudice on the one side or the other; so must the occasional conversation he has been witness to, the appellations he has heard used, the tone of voice with which he has heard the words monk or priest pronounced, and a thousand other evanescent circumstances. It is likewise to be observed, that every question of any weight and importance has numerous dependencies and points of connexion with other subjects, which make it impossible to enter upon the consideration of it without a great variety of previous knowledge. There is no object of investi-

gation perfectly insulated;—we must not conceive therefore of a man's sitting down to it with a mind perfectly new and untutored: he must have passed more or less through a course of studies; and, according to the colour of those studies, his mind will have received a tincture,—that is, a prejudice. —But it is, in truth, the most absurd of all suppositions, that a human being can be educated, or even nourished and brought up, without imbibing numberless prejudices from every thing which passes around him. A child cannot learn the signification of words without receiving ideas along with them; he cannot be impressed with affection to his parents and those about him, without conceiving a predilection for their tastes, opinions, and practices. He forms numberless associations of pain or pleasure, and every association begets a prejudice; he sees objects from a particular spot, and his views of things are contracted or extended according to his position in society: as no two individuals can have the same horizon, so neither can any two have the same associations; and different associations will produce different opinions, as necessarily as, by the laws of perspective, different distances will produce different appearances of visible objects. Let us confess a truth, humiliating perhaps to human pride;—a very small part only of the opinions of the coolest philosopher are the result of fair reasoning; the

rest are formed by his education, his temperament, by the age in which he lives, by trains of thought directed to a particular track through some accidental association—in short, by *prejudice*. But why, after all, should we wish to bring up children without prejudices? A child has occasion to act, long before he can reason. Shall we leave him destitute of all the principles that should regulate his conduct, till he can discover them by the strength of his own genius? If it were possible that one whole generation could be brought up without prejudices, the world must return to the infancy of knowledge, and all the beautiful fabric which has been built up by successive generations must be begun again from the very foundation. Your child has a claim to the advantage of your experience, which it would be cruel and unjust to deprive him of. Will any father say to his son, "My dear child, you are entering upon a world full of intricate and perplexed paths, in which many miss their way, to their final misery and ruin. Amidst many false systems, and much vain science, there is also some true knowledge; there is a right path: I believe I know it, for I have the advantage of years and experience, but I will instil no prejudices into your mind; I shall therefore leave you to find it out as you can; whether your abilities are great or small, you must take the chance of

them. There are various systems in morals; I have examined and found some of a good, others of a bad tendency. There is such a thing as religion; many people think it the most important concern of life: perhaps I am one of them: perhaps I have chosen from amidst the various systems of belief,—many of which are extremely absurd, and some even pernicious,—that which I cherish as the guide of my life, my comfort in all my sorrows, and the foundation of my dearest hopes: but far be it from me to influence you in any manner to receive it; when you are grown up, you must read all the books upon these subjects which you can lay your hands on, for neither in the choice of these would I presume to prejudice your mind: converse with all who pretend to any opinions upon the subject; and whatever happens to be the result, you must abide by it. In the mean time, concerning these important objects you must keep your mind in a perfect equilibrium. It is true you want these principles more now than you can do at any other period of your life; but I had rather you never had them at all, than that you should not come fairly by them." Should we commend the wisdom or the kindness of such a parent? The parent will perhaps plead in his behalf, that it is by no means his intention to leave the mind of his child in the uncultivated state I have supposed. As soon as his understanding

begins to open, he means to discuss with him those propositions on which he wishes him to form an opinion. He will make him read the best books on the subject, and by free conversation and explaining the arguments on both sides, he does not doubt but the youth will soon be enabled to judge satisfactorily for himself. I have no objection to make against this mode of proceeding: as a mode of *instruction*, it is certainly a very good one: but he must know little of human nature, who thinks that after this process the youth will be really in a capacity of judging for himself, or that he is less under the dominion of prejudice than if he had received the same truths from the mere authority of his parent; for most assuredly the arguments on either side will not have been set before him with equal strength or with equal warmth. The persuasive tone, the glowing language, the triumphant retort, will all be reserved for the side on which the parent has formed his own conclusions. It cannot be otherwise; he cannot be convinced himself of what he thinks a truth without wishing to convey that conviction, nor without thinking all that can be urged on the other side weak and futile. He cannot in a matter of importance neutralize his feelings: perfect impartiality can be the result only of indifference. He does not perhaps seem to dictate, but he wishes gently to guide his pupil; and that wish is seldom

disappointed. The child adopts the opinion of his parent, and seems to himself to have adopted it from the decisions of his own judgement; but all these reasonings must be gone over again, and these opinions undergo a fiery ordeal, if ever he comes really to think and determine for himself.

The fact is, that no man, whatever his system may be, refrains from instilling prejudices into his child in any matter he has much at heart. Take a disciple of Rousseau, who contends that it would be very pernicious to give his son any ideas of a Deity till he is of an age to read Clarke or Leibnitz, and ask him if he waits so long to impress on his mind the sentiments of patriotism —the civic affection. O no! you will find his little heart is early taught to beat at the very name of liberty, and that, long before he is capable of forming a single political idea, he has entered with warmth into all the party sentiments and connexions of his parent. He learns to love and hate, to venerate or despise, by rote; and he soon acquires decided opinions, of the real ground of which he can know absolutely nothing. Are not ideas of female honour and decorum imprest first as prejudices; and would any parent wish they should be so much as canvassed till the most settled habits of propriety have rendered it safe to do it? In teaching first by prejudice that which is afterwards to be proved, we do but follow Na-

ture. Instincts are the prejudices she gives us: we follow them implicitly, and they lead us right; but it is not till long afterwards that reason comes and justifies them. Why should we scruple to lead a child to right opinions in the same way by which Nature leads him to right practices!

Still it will be urged that man is a rational being, and therefore reason is the only true ground of belief, and authority is not reason. This point requires a little discussion. That he who receives a truth upon authority has not a reasonable belief, is in one sense true, since he has not drawn it from the result of his own inquiries; but in another it is certainly false, since the authority itself may be to him the best of all reasons for believing it. There are few men who, from the exercise of the best powers of their minds, could derive so good a reason for believing a mathematical truth as the authority of Sir Isaac Newton. There are two principles deeply implanted in the mind of man, without which he could never attain knowledge,—curiosity, and credulity; the former to lead him to make discoveries himself, the latter to dispose him to receive knowledge from others. The credulity of a child to those who cherish him is in early life unbounded. This is one of the most useful instincts he has, and is in fact a precious advantage put into the hands of the parent for storing his mind with ideas of all kinds.

Without this principle of assent he could never gain even the rudiments of knowledge. He receives it, it is true, in the shape of prejudice; but the prejudice itself is founded upon sound reasoning, and conclusive though imperfect experiment. He finds himself weak, helpless, and ignorant; he sees in his parent a being of knowledge and powers more than his utmost capacity can fathom; almost a god to him. He has often done him good, therefore he believes he loves him; he finds him capable of giving him information upon all the subjects he has applied to him about; his knowledge seems unbounded, and his information has led him right whenever he has had occasion to try it by actual experiment: the child does not draw out his little reasonings into a logical form, but this is to him a ground of belief, that his parent knows every thing, and is infallible. Though the proposition is not exactly true, it is sufficiently so for him to act upon: and when he believes in his parent with implicit faith, he believes upon grounds as truly rational as when, in after life, he follows the deductions of his own reason.

But you will say, I wish my son may have nothing to unlearn, and therefore I would have him wait to form an opinion till he is able to do it on solid grounds. And why do you suppose he will have less to unlearn if he follows his own reason than if he followed yours? If he thinks, if he in-

quires, he will no doubt have a great deal to unlearn, whichever course you take with him; but it is better to have some things to unlearn, than to have nothing learnt. Do you hold your own opinions so loosely, so hesitatingly, as not to think them safer to abide by than the first results of his stammering reason? Are there no truths to learn so indubitable as to be without fear of their not approving themselves to his mature and well-directed judgement? Are there none you esteem so useful as to feel anxious that he be put in possession of them? We are solicitous not only to put our children in a capacity of acquiring their daily bread, but to bequeath to them riches which they may receive as an inheritance. Have you no mental wealth you wish to transmit, no stock of ideas he may begin with, instead of drawing them all from the labour of his own brain? If, moreover, your son should not adopt your prejudices, he will certainly adopt those of other people; or, if on subjects of high interest he *could* be kept totally indifferent, the consequence would be, that he would conceive either that such matters were not worth the trouble of inquiry, or that nothing satisfactory was to be learnt about them: for there are negative prejudices as well as positive.

Let parents, therefore, not scruple to use the power God and Nature have put into their hands for the advantage of their offspring. Let them

not fear to impress them with prejudices for whatever is fair and honourable in action—whatever is useful and important in systematic truth. Let such prejudices be wrought into the very texture of the soul. Such truths let them appear to know by intuition. Let the child never remember the period when he did not know them. Instead of sending him to that cold and hesitating belief which is founded on the painful and uncertain consequences of late investigation, let his conviction of all the truths you deem important be mixed up with every warm affection of his nature, and identified with his most cherished recollections—the time will come soon enough when his confidence in you will have received a check. The growth of his own reason and the development of his powers will lead him with a sudden impetus to examine every thing, to canvass every thing, to suspect every thing. If he finds, as he certainly will find, the results of his reasoning different in some respects from those you have given him, far from being now disposed to receive your assertions as proofs, he will rather feel disinclined to any opinion you profess, and struggle to free himself from the net you have woven about him.

The calm repose of his mind is broken, the placid lake is become turbid, and reflects distorted and broken images of things; but be not you

alarmed at the new workings of his thoughts,—it is the angel of reason which descends and troubles the waters. To endeavour to influence by authority would be as useless now as it was salutary before. Lie by in silence, and wait the result. Do not expect the mind of your son is to resemble yours, as your figure is reflected by the image in the glass; he was formed, like you, to use his own judgement, and he claims the high privilege of his nature. His reason is mature, his mind must now form itself. Happy must you esteem yourself, if amidst all lesser differences of opinion, and the wreck of many of your favourite ideas, he still preserves those radical and primary truths which are essential to his happiness, and which different trains of thought and opposite modes of investigation will very often equally lead to.

Let it be well remembered that we have only been recommending those prejudices which go before reason, not those which are contrary to it. To endeavour to make children, or others over whom we have influence, receive systems which we do not believe, merely because it is convenient to ourselves that they should believe them, though a very fashionable practice, makes no part of the discipline we plead for. These are not prejudices, but impositions. We may also grant that nothing should be received as a prejudice which can be

easily made the subject of experiment. A child may be allowed to find out for himself that boiling water will scald his fingers, and mustard bite his tongue; but he must be *prejudiced* against ratsbane, because the experiment would be too costly. In like manner it may do him good to have experienced that little instances of inattention or perverseness draw upon him the displeasure of his parent; but that profligacy is attended with loss of character, is a truth one would rather wish him to take upon trust.

There is no occasion to inculcate by prejudices those truths which it is of no importance for us to know till our powers are able to investigate them. Thus the metaphysical questions of space and time, necessity and free-will, and a thousand others, may safely be left for that age which delights in such discussions. They have no connexion with conduct; and none have any business with them at all but those who are able by such studies to exercise and sharpen their mental powers: but it is not so with those truths on which our well-being depends; these must be taught to all, not only before they can reason upon them, but independently of the consideration whether they will ever be able to reason upon them as long as they live. What has hitherto been said relates only to instilling prejudices into

others; how far a man is to allow them in himself, or, as a celebrated writer expresses it, to *cherish* them, is a different question, on which perhaps I may some time offer my thoughts*. In the mean time I cannot help concluding, that to reject the influence of prejudice in education is itself one of the most unreasonable of prejudices.

* It is to be regretted that Mrs. Barbauld never fulfilled the intention here intimated.—EDITOR.

DIALOGUE IN THE SHADES.

Clio.—THERE is no help for it,—they must go. The river Lethe is here at hand; I shall tear them off and throw them into the stream.

Mercury.—Illustrious daughter of Mnemosyne, Clio! the most respected of the Muses,—you seem disturbed. What is it that brings us the honour of a visit from you in these infernal regions?

Clio.—You are a god of expedients, Mercury; I want to consult you. I am oppressed with the continually increasing demands upon me: I have had more business for these last twenty years than I have often had for two centuries; and if I had, as old Homer says, "a throat of brass and adamantine lungs," I could never get through it. And what did he want this throat of brass for? for a paltry list of ships, canoes rather, which would be laughed at in the Admiralty Office of London. But I must inform you, Mercury, that my roll is so full; and I have so many applications which cannot in decency be refused, that I see no other way than striking off some hundreds of

names in order to make room; and I am come to inform the shades of my determination.

Mercury.—I believe, Clio, you will do right: and as one end of your roll is a little mouldy, no doubt you will begin with that; but the ghosts will raise a great clamour.

Clio.—I expect no less; but necessity has no law. All the parchment in Pergamus is used up, —my roll is long enough to reach from earth to heaven; it is grown quite cumbrous; it takes a life, as mortals reckon lives, to unroll it.

Mercury.—Yet consider, Clio, how many of these have passed a restless life, and encountered all manner of dangers, and bled and died only to be placed upon your list,—and now to be struck off!

Clio.—And committed all manner of crimes, you might have added;—but go they must. Besides, they have been sufficiently recompensed. Have they not been praised, and sung, and admired for some thousands of years? Let them give place to others: What! have they no conscience? no modesty? Would Xerxes, think you, have reason to complain, when his parading expeditions have already procured him above two thousand years of fame, though a Solyman or a Zingis Khan should fill up his place?

Mercury.—Surely you are not going to blot out Xerxes from your list of names?

Clio.—I do not say that I am: but that I keep him is more for the sake of his antagonists than his own. And yet their places might be well supplied by the Swiss heroes of Morgarten, or the brave though unsuccessful patriot Aloys Reding. —But pray what noise is that at the gate?

Mercury.—A number of the shades, who have received an intimation of your purpose, and are come to remonstrate against it.

Clio.—In the name of all the gods whom have we here?—Hercules, Theseus, Jason, Œdipus, Bacchus, Cadmus with a bag of dragon's teeth, and a whole tribe of strange shadowy figures! I shall expect to see the Centaurs and Lapithæ, or Perseus on his flying courser. Away with them; they belong to my sisters, not to me; Melpomene will receive them gladly.

Mercury.—You forget, Clio, that Bacchus conquered India.

Clio.—And had horns like Moses, as Vossius is pleased to say. No, Mercury, I will have nothing to do with these; if ever I received them, it was when I was young and credulous.—As I have said, let my sisters take them; or let them be celebrated in tales for children.

Mercury.—That will not do, Clio; children in this age read none but wise books: stories of giants and dragons are all written for grown-up children now.

Clio.—Be that as it may, I shall clear my hands of them, and of a great many more, I do assure you.

Mercury.—I hope "the tale of Troy divine—!"

Clio.—Divine let it be, but my share in it is very small; I recollect furnishing the catalogue.—Mercury, I will tell you the truth. When I was young, my mother (as arrant a gossip as ever breathed) related to me a great number of stories: and as in those days people could not read or write, I had no better authority for what I recorded: but after letters were found out, and now since the noble invention of printing,—why do you think, Mercury, any one would dare to tell lies in print?

Mercury.—Sometimes perhaps. I have seen a splendid victory in the gazette of one country dwindle into an honourable retreat in that of another.

Clio.—In newspapers, very possibly: but with regard to myself, when I have time to consider and lay things together, I assure you you may depend upon me.—Whom have we in that group which I see indistinctly in a sort of twilight?

Mercury.—Very renowned personages; Ninus, Sesostris, Semiramis, Cheops who built the largest pyramid.

Clio.—If Cheops built the largest pyramid, people are welcome to inquire about him at the spot, —room must be made. As to Semiramis, tell her

her place shall be filled up by an empress and a conqueror from the shores of the wintry Baltic.

Mercury.—The renowned Cyrus is approaching with a look of confidence, for he is introduced by a favourite of yours, the elegant Xenophon.

Clio.—Is that Cyrus? Pray desire him to take off that dress which Xenophon has given him; truly I took him for a Greek philosopher. I fancy queen Tomyris would scarcely recognise him.

Mercury.—Aspasia hopes, for the honour of her sex, that she shall continue to occupy a place among those you celebrate.

Clio.—Tell the mistress of Pericles we can spare her without inconvenience: many ladies are to be found in modern times who possess her eloquence and her talents, with the modesty of a vestal; and should a more perfect likeness be required, modern times may furnish that also.

Mercury.—Here are two figures who approach you with a very dignified air.

Solon and Lycurgus.—We present ourselves, divine Clio, with confidence. We have no fear that you should strike from your roll the lawgivers of Athens and Sparta.

Clio.—Most assuredly not. Yet I must inform you that a name higher than either of yours, and a constitution more perfect, is to be found in a vast continent, of the very existence of which you had not the least suspicion.

Mercury.—I see approaching a person of a no-

ble and spirited air, if he did not hold his head a little on one side as if his neck were awry.

Alexander.—Clio, I need not introduce myself; I am, as you well know, the son of Jupiter Ammon, and my arms have reached even to the remote shore of the Indus.

Clio.—Pray burn your genealogy; and for the rest, suffer me to inform you that the river Indus and the whole peninsula which you scarcely discovered, with sixty millions of inhabitants, is at this moment subject to the dominion of a few merchants in a remote island of the Northern Ocean, the very name of which never reached your ears.

Mercury.—Here is Empedocles, who threw himself into Ætna merely to be placed upon your roll; and Calanus, who mounted his funeral pile before Alexander, from the same motive.

Clio.—They have been remembered long enough in all reason: their places may be supplied by the two next madmen who shall throw themselves under the wheels of the chariot of Jaggernaut,—fanatics are the growth of every age.

Mercury.—Here is a ghost preparing to address you with a very self-sufficient air: his robe is embroidered with flower-de-luces.

Louis XIV.—I am persuaded, Clio, you will recognise *the immortal man.* I have always been a friend and patron of the Muses; my actions are

well known; all Europe has resounded with my name,—the terror of other countries, the glory of my own: I am well assured you are not going to strike me off.

Clio.—To strike you off? certainly not; but to place you many degrees lower in the list; to reduce you from a sun, your favourite emblem, to a star in the galaxy. My sisters have certainly been partial to you: you bought their favour with—how many livres a year? not much more than a London bookseller will give for a quarto poem. But me you cannot bribe.

Louis.—But, Clio, you have yourself recorded my exploits;—the passage of the Rhine, Namur, Flanders, Franche Comté.

Clio.—O Louis, if you could but guess the extent of the present French empire;—but no, it could never enter into your imagination.

Louis.—I rejoice at what you say; I rejoice that my posterity have followed my steps, and improved upon my glory.

Clio.—Your posterity have had nothing to do with it.

Louis.—Remember too the urbanity of my character, how hospitably I received the unfortunate James of England,—England, the natural enemy of France.

Clio.—Your hospitality has been well returned. Your descendants, driven from their thrones,

are at this moment supported by the bounty of the nation and king of England.

Louis.—O Clio, what is it that you tell me! let me hide my diminished head in the deepest umbrage of the grove; let me seek out my dear Maintenon, and tell my beads with her till I forget that I have been either praised or feared.

Clio.—Comfort yourself, however; your name, like the red letter which marks the holiday, though insignificant in itself, shall still enjoy the honour of designating the age of taste and literature.

Mercury.—Here is a whole crowd coming, Clio, I can scarcely keep them off with my wand: they have all got notice of your intentions, and the infernal regions are quite in an uproar,—what is to be done?

Clio.—I cannot tell; the numbers distract me: to examine their pretensions one by one is impossible; I must strike off half of them at a venture: the rest must make room,—they must crowd, they must fall into the back-ground; and where I used to write a name all in capitals with letters of gold illuminated, I must put it in *small pica*. I do assure you, Mercury, I cannot stand the fatigue I undergo, much longer. I am not provided, as you very well know, with either chariot or wings, and I am expected to be in all parts of the globe at once. In the good old times my business lay almost entirely between the Hel-

lespont and the Pillars of Hercules, with sometimes an excursion to the mouths (then seven) of the Nile, or the banks of the Euphrates. But now I am required to be in a hundred places at once; I am called from Jena to Austerlitz, from Cape Trafalgar to Aboukir, and from the Thames to the Ganges and Burampooter; besides a whole continent, a world by itself, fresh and vigorous, which I foresee will find me abundance of employment.

Mercury.—Truly I believe so; I am afraid the old leaven is working in the new world.

Clio.—I am puzzled at this moment how to give the account, which always is expected of me, of the august sovereigns of Europe.

Mercury.—How so?

Clio.—I do not know where to find them; they are most of them upon their *travels.*

Mercury.—You must have been very much employed in the French revolution.

Clio.—Continually; the actors in the scene succeeded one another with such rapidity, that the hero of today was forgotten on the morrow. Necker, Mirabeau, Dumourier, La Fayette, appeared successively like pictures in a magic lanthern—shown for a moment and then withdrawn: and now the space is filled by one tremendous gigantic figure, that throws his broad shadow over half the globe.

Mercury.—The ambition of Napoleon has indeed procured you much employment.

Clio.—Employment! There is not a goddess so harassed as I am; my sisters lead quite idle lives in comparison. Melpomene has in a manner slept through the last half-century, except when now and then she dictated to a certain favourite nymph. Urania, indeed, has employed herself with Herschel in counting the stars; but her task is less than mine. Here am I expected to calculate how many hundred thousands of rational beings cut one another's throats at Austerlitz, and to take the tale of two hundred and thirteen thousand human bodies and ninety-five thousand horses, that lie stiff, frozen and unburied on the banks of the Berecina;—and do you think, Mercury, this can be a pleasant employment?

Mercury.—I have had a great increase of employment myself lately, on account of the multitude of shades I have been obliged to convey; and poor old Charon is almost laid up with the rheumatism: we used to have a holiday comparatively during the winter months; but of late, winter and summer I have observed are much alike to heroes.

Clio.—I wish to Jupiter I could resign my office! Son of Maia, I declare to you I am sick of the horrors I record; I am sick of man-

kind. For above these three thousand years have I been warning them and reading lessons to them, and they will not mend: Robespierre was as cruel as Sylla, and Napoleon has no more moderation than Pyrrhus. The human frame, of curious texture, delicately formed, feeling, and irritable by the least annoyance, with face erect and animated with Promethean fire, they wound, they lacerate, they mutilate with most perverted ingenuity.—I will go and record the actions of the tigers of Africa; in them such fierceness is natural—Nay, the human race will be exterminated if this work of destruction goes on much longer.

Mercury.—With regard to that matter, Clio, I can set your heart at rest. A great philosopher has lately discovered that the world is in imminent danger of being over-peopled, and that if twenty or forty thousand men could not be persuaded every now and then to stand and be shot at, we should be forced to eat one another. This discovery has had a wonderful effect in quieting tender consciences. The calculation is very simple, any schoolboy will explain it to you.

Clio.—O what a number of fertile plains and green savannahs, and tracts covered with trees of beautiful foliage, have never yet been pressed by human footsteps! My friend Swift's project of eat-

ing children was not so cruel as these bloody and lavish sacrifices to Mars, the most savage of all the gods.

Mercury.—You forget yourself, Clio; Mars is not worshiped now in Christian Europe.

Clio.—By Jupiter but he is! Have I not seen the bloody and torn banners, with martial music and military procession, brought into the temple,—and whose temple, thinkest thou? and to whom have thanks been given on both sides, amidst smoking towns and wasted fields, after the destruction of man and devastation of the fair face of nature!—And Mercury, god of wealth and frauds, you have your temple too, though your name is not inscribed there.

Mercury.—I am afraid men will always love wealth.

Clio.—O if I had to record only such pure names as a Washington or a Howard!

Mercury.—It would be very gratifying, certainly; but then, Clio, you would have very little to do, and might almost as well burn your roll.

KNOWLEDGE AND HER DAUGHTER:

A FABLE.

KNOWLEDGE, the daughter of Jupiter, descended from the skies to visit man. She found him naked and helpless, living on the spontaneous fruits of the earth, and little superior to the ox that grazed beside him. She clothed and fed him; she built him palaces; she showed him the hidden riches of the earth, and pointed with her finger the course of the stars as they rose and set in the horizon. Man became rich with her gifts, and accomplished from her conversation. In process of time Knowledge became acquainted with the schools of the philosophers; and being much taken with their theories and their conversation, she married one of them. They had many beautiful and healthy children; but among the rest was a daughter of a different complexion from all the rest, whose name was Doubt. She grew up under many disadvantages; she had a great hesitation in her speech; a cast in her eye, which, however, was keen and piercing; and was subject to nervous tremblings. Her mother saw her with

dislike: but her father, who was of the sect of the Pyrrhonists, cherished and taught her logic, in which she made a great progress. The Muse of History was much troubled with her intrusions: she would tear out whole leaves, and blot over many pages of her favourite works. With the divines her depredations were still worse: she was forbidden to enter a church; notwithstanding which, she would slip in under the surplice, and spend her time in making mouths at the priest. If she got at a library, she destroyed or blotted over the most valuable manuscripts. A most undutiful child; she was never better pleased than when she could unexpectedly trip up her mother's heels, or expose a rent or an unseemly patch in her flowing and ample garment. With mathematicians she never meddled; but in all other systems of knowledge she intruded herself, and her breath diffused a mist over the page which often left it scarcely legible. Her mother at length said to her, "Thou art my child, and I know it is decreed that while I tread this earth thou must accompany my footsteps; but thou art mortal, I am immortal; and there will come a time when I shall be freed from thy intrusion, and shall pursue my glorious track from star to star, and from system to system, without impediment and without check."

AN ADDRESS

TO

THE OPPOSERS OF THE REPEAL

OF THE

CORPORATION AND TEST ACTS.

1790.

ADDRESS TO THE OPPOSERS

OF THE

REPEAL OF THE CORPORATION AND TEST ACTS.

GENTLEMEN,

HAD the question of yesterday been decided in a manner more favourable to our wishes, which however the previous intimations of your temper in the business left us little room to expect, we should have addressed our thanks to you on the occasion. As it is, we address to you our thanks for much casual light thrown upon the subject, and for many incidental testimonies of your esteem (whether voluntary or involuntary we will not stop to examine) which in the course of this discussion you have favoured us with. We thank you for the compliment paid the dissenters, when you suppose that the moment they are eligible to places of power and profit, all such places will at once be filled with them. Not content with confounding, by an artful sophism, the right of eligibility with the right to offices, you again confound that right with the probable fact, and then argue accordingly. Is the Test Act, your boasted bulwark, of equal necessity with the dykes in

Holland; and do we wait, like an impetuous sea, to rush in and overwhelm the land? Our pretensions, gentlemen, are far humbler. We had not the presumption to imagine that, inconsiderable as we are in numbers, compared to the established church; inferior too in fortune and influence; labouring, as we do, under the frown of the court, and the anathema of the orthodox; we should make our way so readily into the secret recesses of royal favour; and of a sudden, like the frogs of Egypt, swarm about your barns, and under your canopies, and in your kneading troughs, and in the chamber of the king. We rather wished this act as the removal of a stigma than the possession of a certain advantage, and we might have been cheaply pleased with the acknowledgement of the right, though we had never been fortunate enough to enjoy the emolument.

Another compliment for which we offer our acknowledgments may be extracted from the great ferment which has been raised by thic business all over the country. What stir and movement has it occasioned among the different orders of men! How quick the alarm has been taken, and sounded from the church to the senate, and from the press to the people; while fears and forebodings were communicated like an electric shock! The old cry of "The church is in danger" has again been made to vibrate in our ears. Here too, if

we gave way to impressions of vanity, we might suppose ourselves of much greater importance in the political scale than our numbers and situation seem to indicate. It shows at least we are feared, which to some minds would be the next grateful thing to being beloved. We, indeed, should only wish for the latter; nor should we have ventured to suppose, but from the information you have given us, that your Church *was* so weak. What! fenced and guarded as she is with her exclusive privileges and rich emoluments, stately with her learned halls and endowed colleges, with all the attraction of her wealth, and the thunder of her censures; all that the orator calls "the majesty of the church" about her,—and does she, resting in security under the broad buckler of the state, does she tremble at the naked and unarmed sectary? him, whose early connexions and phrase uncouth, and unpopular opinions, set him at distance from the means of advancement; him, who in the intercourses of neighbourhood and common life, like new settlers, finds it necessary to clear the ground before him, and is ever obliged to root up a prejudice before he can plant affection? He is not of the world, gentlemen; and the world loveth her own. All that distinguishes him from other men to common observation, operates in his disfavour. His very advocates, while they plead his cause, are ready to blush for their client; and in

justice to their own character think it necessary to disclaim all knowledge of his obscure tenets. And is it from his hand you expect the demolition of so massy an edifice? Does the simple removal of the Test Act involve its destruction? These were not our thoughts. We had too much reverence for your establishment to imagine that the structure was so loosely put together, or so much shaken by years, as that the removal of so slight a pin should endanger the whole fabric—or is the Test Act the talisman which holds it together, that, when it is broken, the whole must fall to pieces like the magic palace of an enchanter? Surely no species of regular architecture can depend upon so slight a support.—— After all what is it we have asked?——to share in the rich benefices of the established church? to have the gates of her schools and universities thrown open to us? No: let her keep her golden prebends, her scarfs, her lawn, her mitres. Let her dignitaries be still associated to the honours of legislation; and in our courts of executive justice, let her inquisitorial tribunals continue to thwart the spirit of a free constitution by a heterogeneous mixture of priestly jurisdiction. Let her still gather into barns, though she neither sows nor reaps. We desire not to share in her good things. We know it is the children's bread, which must not be given to dogs. But having

these good things, we could wish to hear her say with the generous spirit of Esau, "I have enough, my brother." We could wish to be considered as children of the state, though we are not so of the church. She must excuse us if we look upon the alliance between her and the state as an ill-assorted union, and herself as a mother-in-law who, with the too frequent arts of that relation, is ever endeavouring to prejudice the state, the common father of us all, against a part of his offspring, for the sake of appropriating a larger portion to her own children. We claim no share in the dowry of her who is not our mother, but we may be pardoned for thinking it hard to be deprived of the inheritance of our father.

But it is objected to us that we have sinned in the manner of making our request, we have brought it forward as a claim instead of asking it as a favour. We should have sued, and crept, and humbled ourselves. Our preachers and our writers should not have dared to express the warm glow of honest sentiment, or even in a foreign country glance at the downfall of a haughty aristocracy. As we were suppliants, we should have behaved like suppliants, and then perhaps ——No, gentlemen, we wish to have it understood that we *do* claim it as a right. It loses otherwise half its value. We claim it as men, we claim it as citizens, we claim it as good sub-

jects. We are not conscious of having brought the disqualification upon ourselves by a failure in any of these characters.

But we already enjoy a complete toleration—It is time, so near the end of the eighteenth century, it is surely time to speak with precision, and to call things by their proper names. What you call toleration, we call the exercise of a natural and inalienable right. We do not conceive it to be toleration, first to strip a man of all his dearest rights, and then to give him back a part; or even if it were the whole. You tolerate us in worshiping God according to our consciences—and why not tolerate a man in the use of his limbs, in the disposal of his private property, the contracting his domestic engagements, or any other the most acknowledged privileges of humanity? It is not to these things that the word toleration is applied with propriety. It is applied, where from lenity or prudence we forbear doing all which in justice we might do. It is the bearing with what is confessedly an evil, for the sake of some good with which it is connected. It is the christian virtue of long-suffering; it is the political virtue of adapting measures to times and seasons and situations. Abuses are tolerated, when they are so interwoven with the texture of the piece, that the operation of removing them becomes too delicate and hazardous. Unjust claims are tolerated, when

they are complied with for the sake of peace and conscience. The failings and imperfections of those characters in which there appears an evident preponderancy of virtue, are tolerated. These are the proper objects of toleration, these exercise the patience of the christian and the prudence of the statesman; but if there be a power that advances pretensions which we think unfounded in reason or scripture, that exercises an empire within an empire, and claims submission from those naturally her equals; and if we, from a spirit of brotherly charity, and just deference to public opinion, and a salutary dread of innovation, acquiesce in these pretensions; let her at least be told that the virtue of forbearance should be transferred, and that it is we who tolerate her, not she who tolerates us.

But this it is again imputed to us is no contest for religious liberty, but a contest for power, and place, and influence. We want civil offices—. And why should citizens *not* aspire to civil offices? Why should not the fair field of generous competition be freely opened to every one? A contention for power—It is not a contention for power between churchmen and dissenters, nor is it as dissenters we wish to enter the lists; we wish to bury every name of distinction in the common appellation of citizen. We wish not the name of dissenter to be pronounced, except in our

theological researches and religious assemblies. It is you, who by considering us as aliens, make us so. It is you who force us to make our dissent a prominent feature in our character. It is you who give relief, and cause to come out upon the canvass what we modestly wished to have shaded over, and thrown into the back-ground. If we are a party, remember it is you who force us to be so. We should have sought places of trust—by no unfair, unconstitutional methods should we have sought them, but in the open and honourable rivalship of virtuous emulation; by trying to deserve well of our king and our country. Our attachment to both is well known.

Perhaps, however, we have all this while mistaken the matter, and what we have taken for bigotry and a narrow-minded spirit is after all only an affair of calculation and arithmetic. Our fellow-subjects remember the homely proverb, "the fewer the better cheer," and, very naturally, are glad to see the number of candidates lessened for the advantages they are themselves striving after. If so, we ask their excuse, their conduct is quite simple; and if, from the number of concurrents, government were to strike out all above or under five feet high, or all whose birthdays happened before the summer solstice, or, by any other mode of distinction equally arbitrary and whimsical, were to reduce the number of their

rivals, they would be equally pleased, and equally unwilling to admit an alteration. We are a mercantile people, accustomed to consider chances, and we can easily perceive that in the lottery of life, if a certain proportion are by some means or other excluded from a prize, the adventure is exactly so much the better for the remainder. If this indeed be the case, as I suspect it may, we have been accusing you wrongfully. Your conduct is founded upon principles as sure and unvarying as mathematical truths; and all further discussion is needless. We drop the argument at once. Men have now and then been reasoned out of their prejudices, but it were a hopeless attempt to reason them out of their interest.

We likewise beg leave to apologize to those of the clergy whom we have unwillingly offended by endeavouring to include them as parties in our cause. "Pricked to it by foolish honesty and love," we thought that what appeared so grievous to us could not be very pleasant to them: but we are convinced of our mistake, and sorry for our officiousness. We own it, sirs, it was a fond imagination that because we should have felt uneasy under the obligation imposed upon you, it should have the same effect upon yourselves. It was weak to impute to you an idle delicacy of conscience, which perhaps can only be preserved at a distance from the splendid scenes which you

have continually in prospect. But you will pardon us. We did not consider the force of early discipline over the mind. We are not accustomed to those salvos, and glosses, and accommodating modes of reasoning with which you have been long familiarized. You have the happy art of making easy to yourselves greater things than this. You are regularly disciplined troops, and understand every nice manœuvre and dexterous evolution which the nature of the ground may require. We are like an unbroken horse; hard-mouthed, and apt to start at shadows. Our conduct towards you in this particular we acknowledge may fairly provoke a smile at our simplicity. Besides, upon reflection, what should you startle at? The mixture of secular and religious concerns cannot to you appear extraordinary; and in truth nothing is more reasonable than that, as the state has been drawn in to the aggrandizement of your church, your church should in return make itself subservient to the convenience of the state. If we are wise, we shall never again make ourselves uneasy about your share of the grievance.

But we were enumerating our obligations to you, gentlemen, who have thwarted our request; and we must take the liberty to inform you that if it be any object of our ambition to exist and attract notice as a separate body, you have done us the greatest service in the world. What we de-

sired, by blending us with the common mass of citizens, would have sunk our relative importance, and consigned our discussions to oblivion. You have refused us; and by so doing, you keep us under the eye of the public, in the interesting point of view of men who suffer under a deprivation of their rights. You have set a mark of separation upon us, and it is not in our power to take it off; but it is in our power to determine whether it shall be a disgraceful stigma or an honourable distinction. If, by the continued peaceableness of our demeanour, and the superior sobriety of our conversation,—a sobriety for which we have not yet quite ceased to be distinguished; if, by our attention to literature, and that ardent love of liberty which you are pretty ready to allow us, we deserve esteem, we shall enjoy it. If our rising seminaries should excel in wholesome discipline and regularity, if they should be schools of morality, and yours, unhappily, should be corrupted into schools of immorality, you will entrust us with the education of your youth, when the parent, trembling at the profligacy of the times, wishes to preserve the blooming and ingenuous child from the degrading taint of early licentiousness. If our writers are solid, elegant, or nervous, you will read our books and imbibe our sentiments, and even your preachers will not disdain, occasionally, to *illustrate* our morality. If we en-

lighten the world by philosophical discoveries, you will pay the involuntary homage due to genius, and boast of our names when, amongst foreign societies, you are inclined to do credit to your country. If your restraints operate towards keeping us in that middle rank of life where industry and virtue most abound, we shall have the honour to count ourselves among that class of the community which has ever been the source of manners, of population, and of wealth. If we seek for fortune in that track which you have left most open to us, we shall increase your commercial importance. If, in short, we render ourselves worthy of respect, you cannot hinder us from being respected—you cannot help respecting us —and in spite of all names of opprobrious separation, we shall be bound together by mutual esteem and the mutual reciprocation of good offices.

One good office we shall most probably do you is rather an invidious one, and seldom meets with thanks. By laying us under such a marked disqualification, you have rendered us—we hope not uncandid—we hope not disaffected—May the God of love and charity preserve us from all such acrimonious dispositions! But you certainly have, as far as in you lies, rendered us quick-sighted to encroachment and abuses of all kinds. We have the feelings of men; and though we should

be very blameable to suffer ourselves to be biassed by any private hardships, and hope that, as a body, we never shall, yet this you will consider, that we have at least no bias on the other side. We have no favours to blind us, no golden padlock on our tongues, and therefore it is probable enough, that, if cause is given, we shall cry aloud and spare not. But in this you have done yourselves no disservice. It is perfectly agreeable to the jealous spirit of a free constitution that there should be some who will season the mass with the wholesome spirit of opposition. Without a little of that bitter leaven there is great danger of its being corrupted.

With regard to ourselves, you have by your late determination given perhaps a salutary, perhaps a seasonable check to that spirit of worldliness, which of late has gained but too much ground amongst us. Before you—before the world—we have a right to bear the brow erect, to talk of rights and services; but there is a place and a presence where it will become us to make no boast. We, as well as you, are infected. We, as well as you, have breathed in the universal contagion: a contagion more noxious, and more difficult to escape, than that which on the plains of Cherson has just swept from the world the martyr of humanity. The contagion of selfish indifference and fashionable manners has seized

us; and our languishing virtue feels the debilitating influence. If you were more conversant in our assemblies than your prejudices will permit you to be, you would see indifference, where you fancy there is an over proportion of zeal: you would see principles giving way, and families melting into the bosom of the church under the warm influence of prosperity. You would see that establishments, without calling coercive measures to their aid, possess attraction enough severely to try the virtue and steadiness of those who separate from them. You need not strew thorns, or put bars across our path; your golden apples are sufficient to make us turn out of the way. Believe me, gentlemen, you do not know us sufficiently to aim your censure where we should be most vulnerable.

Nor need you apprehend from us the slightest danger to your own establishment. If you will needs have it that it is in danger, we wish you to be aware that the danger arises from among yourselves. If ever your creeds and formularies become as grievous to the generality of your clergy as they already are to many delicate and thinking minds amongst them; if ever any material articles of your professed belief should be generally disbelieved, or that order which has been accustomed to supply faithful pastors and learned inquirers after truth should become a burden upon a gene-

rous public, the cry for reformation would then be loud and prevailing. It would be heard. Doctrines which will not stand the test of argument and reason will not always be believed; and when they have ceased to be generally believed, they will not long be articles of belief. If, therefore, there is any weak place in your system, any thing which you are obliged to gloss over and touch with a tender hand, any thing which shrinks at investigation—look ye to it, its extinction is not far off. Doubts and difficulties, that arise first amongst the learned, will not stop there;—they inevitably spread downwards from class to class: and if the people should ever find that your articles are generally subscribed as articles of peace, they will be apt to remember that they are articles of expense too. If all the dissenters in the kingdom, still believing as dissenters do, were this moment, in order to avoid the reproach of schism, to enter the pale of your church, they would do you mischief; they would hasten its decline: and if all who in their hearts dissent from your professions of faith were to cease making them, and throw themselves amongst the dissenters, you would stand the firmer for it. Your church is in no danger because we are of a different church; they might stand together to the end of time without interference: but it will be in great danger whenever it has within itself

many who have thrown aside its doctrines, or even, who do not embrace them in the simple and obvious sense. All the power and policy of man cannot continue a system long after its truth has ceased to be acknowledged, or an establishment long after it has ceased to contribute to utility. It is equally vain as to expect to preserve a tree whose roots are cut away. It may look as green and flourishing as before for a short time; but its sentence is passed, its principle of life is gone, and death is already within it. If then you think the church in danger, be not backward to preserve the sound part by sacrificing the decayed.

To return to ourselves and our feelings on the business lately in agitation—You will excuse us if we do not appear with the air of men baffled and disappointed. Neither do we blush at our defeat;—we may blush, indeed, but it is for our country: but we lay hold on the consoling persuasion, that reason, truth and liberality must finally prevail. We appeal from Philip intoxicated to Philip sober. We know you will refuse us while you are narrow-minded, but you will not always be narrow-minded. You have too much light and candour not to have more. We will no more attempt to pluck the green unripe fruit. We see in you our future friends and brethren, eager to confound and blend with ours your interests and your affections. You will grant us all

we ask. The only question between us is, whether you will do it today;—tomorrow you certainly will. You will even entreat us, if need were, to allow you to remove from your country the stigma of illiberality. We appeal to the certain, sure operation of increasing light and knowledge, which it is no more in your power to stop, than to repel the tide with your naked hand, or to wither with your breath the genial influence of vegetation. The spread of that light is in general gradual and imperceptible; but there are periods when its progress is accelerated, when it seems with a sudden flash to open the firmament, and pour in day at once. Can ye not discern the signs of the times? The minds of men are in movement from the Borysthenes to the Atlantic. Agitated with new and strong emotions, they swell and heave beneath oppression, as the seas within the polar circle, when, at the approach of spring, they grow impatient to burst their icy chains; when what, but an instant before, seemed so firm,—spread for many a dreary league like a floor of solid marble,—at once with a tremendous noise gives way, long fissures spread in every direction, and the air resounds with the clash of floating fragments, which every hour are broken from the mass. The genius of Philosophy is walking abroad, and with the touch of Ithuriel's spear is trying the establishments of the earth.

The various forms of Prejudice, Superstition, and Servility start up in their true shapes, which had long imposed upon the world under the revered semblances of Honour, Faith, and Loyalty. Whatever is loose must be shaken, whatever is corrupted must be lopt away; whatever is not built on the broad basis of public utility must be thrown to the ground. Obscure murmurs gather, and swell into a tempest; the spirit of Inquiry, like a severe and searching wind, penetrates every part of the great body politic; and whatever is unsound, whatever is infirm, shrinks at the visitation. Liberty, here with the lifted crosier in her hand, and the crucifix conspicuous on her breast; there, led by Philosophy, and crowned with the civic wreath, animates men to assert their long-forgotten rights. With a policy, far more liberal and comprehensive than the boasted establishments of Greece and Rome, she diffuses her blessings to every class of men; and even extends a smile of hope and promise to the poor African, the victim of hard, impenetrable avarice. Man, as man, becomes an object of respect. Tenets are transferred from theory to practice. The glowing sentiment and the lofty speculation no longer serve "but to adorn the pages of a book;" they are brought home to men's business and bosoms; and, what some centuries ago it was daring but to think, and dangerous to express, is now realized

and carried into effect. Systems are analysed into their first principles, and principles are fairly pursued to their legitimate consequences. The enemies of reformation, who palliate what they cannot defend, and defer what they dare not refuse; who, with Festus, put off to a more convenient season what, only because it is the present season, is inconvenient, stand aghast, and find they have no power to put back the important hour, when nature is labouring with the birth of great events. Can ye not discern—But you do discern these signs; you discern them well, and your alarm is apparent. You see a mighty empire breaking from bondage, and exerting the energies of recovered freedom: and England—which was used to glory in being the assertor of liberty and refuge of the oppressed—England, who with generous and respectful sympathy, in times not far remote from our own memory, afforded an asylum to so many of the subjects of that very empire, when crushed beneath the iron rod of persecution; and, by so doing, circulated a livelier abhorrence of tyranny within her own veins—England, who has long reproached her with being a slave, now censures her for daring to be free. England, who has held the torch to her, is mortified to see it blaze brighter in her hands. England, for whom, and for whose manners and habits of thinking, that empire has, for

some time past, felt even an enthusiastic predilection; and to whom, as a model of laws and government, she looks up with affectionate reverence—England, nursed at the breast of liberty, and breathing the purest spirit of enlightened philosophy, views a sister nation with affected scorn and real jealousy, and presumes to ask whether she yet exists:—Yes, all of her exists that is worthy to do so. Her dungeons indeed exist no longer, the iron doors are forced, the massy walls are thrown down; and the liberated spectres, trembling between joy and horror, may now blazon the infernal secrets of their prison-house. Her cloistered monks no longer exist, nor does the soft heart of sensibility beat behind the grate of a convent; but the best affections of the human mind, permitted to flow in their natural channel, diffuse their friendly influence over the brightening prospect of domestic happiness. Nobles, the creatures of kings, exist there no longer: but man, the creature of God, exists there. Millions of men exist there, who only now truly begin to exist, and hail with shouts of grateful acclamation the better birthday of their country. Go on, generous nation, set the world an example of virtues as you have of talents. Be our model, as we have been yours. May the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of moderation, the spirit of firmness, guide and bless your counsels! Overcome our

wayward perverseness by your steadiness and temper. Silence the scoff of your enemies, and the misgiving fears of your timorous well-wishers. Go on to destroy the empire of prejudices, that empire of gigantic shadows, which are only formidable while they are not attacked. Cause to succeed to the mad ambition of conquest the peaceful industry of commerce, and the simple, useful toils of agriculture. Instructed by the experience of past centuries, and by many a sad and sanguine page in your own histories, may you no more attempt to blend what God has made separate; but may religion and civil polity, like the two necessary but opposite elements of fire and water, each in its province do service to mankind, but never again be forced into discordant union. Let the wandering pilgrims of every tribe and complexion, who in other lands find only an asylum, find with you a country; and may you never seek other proof of the purity of your faith than the largeness of your charity. In your manners, your language, and habits of life, let a manly simplicity, becoming the intercourse of equals with equals, take the place of overstrained refinement and adulation. Let public reformation prepare the way for private. May the abolition of domestic tyranny introduce the modest train of household virtues, and purer incense be burned upon the hallowed altar of conjugal fidelity. Ex-

hibit to the world the rare phenomenon of a patriot minister, of a philosophic senate. May a pure and perfect system of legislation proceed from their forming hands, free from those irregularities and abuses, the wear and tear of a constitution, which in a course of years are necessarily accumulated in the best-formed states; and like the new creation in its first gloss and freshness, yet free from any taint of corruption, when its Maker blessed and called it good. May you never lose sight of the great principle you have held forth,—the natural equality of men. May you never forget that without public spirit there can be no liberty; that without virtue there may be a confederacy, but cannot be a community. May you, and may we, consigning to oblivion every less generous competition, only contest who shall set the brightest example to the nations; and may its healing influence be diffused, till the reign of Peace shall spread

> .....from shore to shore,
> Till wars shall cease, and slavery be no more.

Amidst causes of such mighty operation, what are we, and what are our petty, peculiar interests? Triumph or despondency at the success or failure of our plans, would be treason to the large, expanded, comprehensive wish which embraces the general interests of humanity. Here then we fix

our foot with undoubting confidence, sure that all events are in the hands of Him, who from seeming evil

> ..... is still educing good;
> And better thence again, and better still,
> In infinite progression.

In this hope we look forward to the period when the name of Dissenter shall no more be heard of than that of Romanist or Episcopalian; when nothing shall be venerable but truth, and nothing valued but utility.

A DISSENTER.

March 3, 1790.

SINS OF GOVERNMENT, SINS OF THE NATION;

OR,

A DISCOURSE FOR THE FAST,

APPOINTED ON APRIL 19, 1793.

SINS OF GOVERNMENT,

SINS OF THE NATION.

My Brethren,

We are called upon by high authority to separate, for religious purposes, this portion of our common time. The shops are shut; the artisan is summoned from his loom, and the husbandman from his plough; the whole nation, in the midst of its business, its pleasures, and its pursuits, makes a sudden stop, and wears the semblance, at least, of seriousness and concern. It is natural for you to inquire, What is the purport of all this?—the answer is in the words of my text: "*Ye stand this day, all of you, before the face of the Lord.*"—Deuteronomy, xxix. 10. You stand all of you; that is, you stand here as a nation, and you stand for the declared purpose of confessing your sins, and humbling yourselves before the Supreme Being.

Every individual, my brethren, who has a sense of religion, and a desire of conforming his conduct to its precepts, will frequently retire into himself

to discover his faults; and having discovered, to repent of,—and having repented of, to amend them. Nations have likewise their faults to repent of, their conduct to examine; and it is therefore no less becoming and salutary, that they, from time to time, should engage in the same duty. Those sins which we have to repent of as individuals, belong to such transactions as relate to our private concerns, and are executed by us in our private capacity; such as buying, selling, the management of our family economy, differences arising from jarring interests and interfering claims between us and our neighbours, &c. Those sins which, as a nation, we have to repent of, belong to national acts.

We act as a nation, when, through the organ of the legislative power, which speaks the will of the nation, and by means of the executive power which does the will of the nation, we enact laws, form alliances, make war or peace, dispose of the public money, or do any of those things which belong to us in our collective capacity. As, comparatively, few individuals have any immediate share in these public acts, we might be tempted to forget the responsibility which attaches to the nation at large with regard to them, did not the wisdom and piety of the governing powers, by thus calling us together on every public emergency, remind us that they are all our own acts; and

that, for every violation of integrity, justice, or humanity in public affairs, it is incumbent upon every one of us to humble himself personally before the tribunal of Almighty God.

That this is the true and only rational interpretation of the solemnities of this day, is evident from hence, that we are never enjoined to confess the sins of other people; but our own sins. To take upon ourselves the faults of others, savours of presumption rather than humility. There would be an absurd mockery in pretending to humble ourselves before God for misdeeds which we have neither committed, nor have any power to amend. Those evils which we could not help, and in which we have had no share, are subjects of grief indeed, but not of remorse. If an oppressive law, or a destructive war, were of the nature of a volcano or a hurricane, proceeding from causes totally independent of our operations,—all we should have to do would be to bow our heads in silent submission, and to bear their ravages with a manly patience. We do not repent of a dangerous disorder or a sickly constitution, because these are things which do not depend upon our own efforts. If, therefore, the nation at large had nothing to do in the affairs of the nation, the piety of our rulers would have led them to fast and pray by themselves alone, without inviting us to concur in this salutary work. But we are called upon to

repent of national sins, because we can help them, and because we ought to help them. We are not fondly to imagine we can make of kings, or of lawgivers, the scapegoats to answer for our follies and our crimes: by the services of this day they call upon us to answer for them; they throw the blame where it ought ultimately to rest; that is, where the power ultimately rests. It were trifling with our consciences to endeavour to separate the acts of governors sanctioned by the nation, from the acts of the nation; for, in every transaction the principal is answerable for the conduct of the agents he employs to transact it. If the maxim that the king can do no wrong throws upon ministers the responsibility, because without ministers no wrong could be done, the same reason throws it from them upon the people, without whom ministers could do no wrong.

The language of the Proclamation then may be thus interpreted:—People! who in your individual capacities are rich and poor, high and low, governors and governed, assemble yourselves in the unity of your public existence; rest from your ordinary occupations, give a different direction to the exercises of your public worship, confess,—not every man his own sins, but all the sins of all. We, your appointed rulers, before we allow ourselves to go on in executing your will in a conjuncture so important, force you to make a pause,

that you may be constrained to reflect, that you may bring this will, paramount every thing else, into the sacred presence of God; that you may there examine it, and see whether it be agreeable to his will, and to the eternal obligations of virtue and good morals. If not, the guilt be upon your own heads; we disclaim the awful responsibility.

Supposing that you are now prepared by proper views of the subject, I shall go on to investigate those sins which a nation is most apt to be betrayed into, leaving it to each of you to determine whether, and how far, any one of them ought to make a part of our humiliation on this day.

Societies being composed of individuals, the faults of societies proceed from the same bad passions, the same pride, selfishness, and thirst of gain, by which individuals are led to transgress the rules of duty; they require therefore the same curb to restrain them, and hence the necessity of a national religion. You will probably assert, that most nations have one: but, by a national religion, I do not mean the burning a few wretches twice or thrice in a year in honour of God, nor yet the exacting subscription to some obscure tenets, believed by few, and understood by none; nor yet the investing a certain order of men dressed in a particular habit, with civil privileges and secular emolument;—by national religion I

understand, the extending to those affairs in which we act in common, and as a body, that regard to religion, by which, when we act singly, we all profess to be guided. "Nothing seems more obvious; and yet there are men who appear not insensible to the rules of morality as they respect individuals, and who unaccountably disclaim them with respect to nations. They will not cheat their opposite neighbour, but they will take a pride in overreaching a neighbouring state; they would scorn to foment dissensions in the family of an acquaintance, but they will do so by a community without scruple; they would not join with a gang of housebreakers to plunder a private dwelling, but they have no principle which prevents them from joining with a confederacy of princes to plunder a province. As private individuals, they think it right to pass by little injuries, but as a people they think they cannot carry too high a principle of proud defiance and sanguinary revenge. This sufficiently shows, that whatever rule they may acknowledge for their private conduct, they have nothing that can be properly called national religion; and indeed, it is very much to be suspected, that their religion in the former case is very much assisted by the contemplation of those pains and penalties which society has provided against the crimes of individuals. But the united will of a whole people

cannot make wrong right, or sanction one act of rapacity, injustice, or breach of faith. The first principle, therefore, we must lay down is, that we are to submit our public conduct to the same rules by which we are to regulate our private actions: a nation that does this is, as a nation, religious; a nation that does it not, though it should fast, and pray, and wear sackcloth, and pay tithes, and build churches, is, as a nation, profligate and unprincipled.

The vices of nations may be divided into those which relate to their own internal proceedings, or to their relations with other states. With regard to the first, the causes for humiliation are various. Many nations are guilty of the crime of permitting oppressive laws and bad governments to remain amongst them, by which the poor are crushed, and the lives of the innocent are laid at the mercy of wicked and arbitrary men. This is a national sin of the deepest dye, as it involves in it most others. It is painful to reflect how many atrocious governments there are in the world; and how little even they who enjoy good ones seem to understand their true nature. We are apt to speak of the happiness of living under a mild government, as if it were like the happiness of living under an indulgent climate; and when we thank God for it, we rank it with the blessings of the air and of the soil; whereas we ought to thank

God for the wisdom and virtue of living under a good government; for a good government is the first of national duties. It is indeed a happiness, and one which demands our most grateful thanks, to be born under one which spares us the trouble and hazard of changing it: but a people born under a good government will probably not die under one, if they conceive of it as of an indolent and passive happiness, to be left for its preservation to fortunate conjunctures, and the floating and variable chances of incalculable events;—our second duty is to keep it good.

We shall not be able to fulfil either of these duties, except we cultivate in our hearts the requisite dispositions. One of the most fruitful sources of evil in the transaction of national affairs is a spirit of insubordination. Without a quiet subordination to lawful authority, peace, order, and the ends of good government, can never be attained. To fix this subordination on its proper basis, it is only necessary to establish in our minds this plain principle,—that the will of the minority should ever yield to that of the majority. By this simple axiom, founded on those common principles of justice which all men understand, the largest society may be held together with equal ease as the smallest, provided only some well-contrived and orderly method be established for ascertaining that will. It is the immediate

extinction of all faction, sedition, and tyranny. It supersedes the necessity of governing by systems of blinding or terrifying the people. It puts an end equally to the cabinet cabal, and the muffled conspiracy, and occasions every thing to go on smoothly, openly, and fairly; whereas, if the minority attempt to impose their will upon the majority, so unnatural a state of things will not be submitted to without constant struggles on the one side, and constant jealousies on the other. There are two descriptions of men who are in danger of forgetting this excellent rule; public functionaries, and reformers. Public functionaries, being intrusted with large powers for managing the affairs of their fellow-citizens,—which management, from the nature of things, must necessarily be in the hands of a few,—are very apt to confound the executive power with the governing will; they require, therefore, to be observed with a wholesome suspicion, and to be frequently reminded of the nature and limits of their office. Reformers, conceiving of themselves as of a more enlightened class than the bulk of mankind, are likewise apt to forget the deference due to them. Stimulated by newly discovered truths, of which they feel the full force, they are not willing to wait for the gradual spread of knowledge, the subsiding of passion, and the undermining of prejudices. They too contemn a

swinish multitude, and aim at an aristocracy of talents. It is indeed their business to attack the prejudices, and to rectify, if they can, the systems of their countrymen, but, in the mean time, to acquiesce in them. It is their business to sow the seed, and let it lie patiently in the bosom of the ground,—perhaps for ages,—to prepare, not to bring about revolutions. The public is not always in the wrong for not giving in to their views, even where they have the appearance of reason; for their plans are often crude and premature, their ideas too refined for real life, and influenced by their own particular cast of thinking: they want people to be happy their way; whereas every one must be happy his own way. Freedom is a good thing; but if a nation is not disposed to accept of it, it is not to be presented to them on the point of a bayonet. Freedom is a valuable blessing; but if even a nation that has enjoyed that blessing evidently chooses to give it up, the voice of the people ought to prevail: men of more liberal minds should warn them indeed what they are about; but having done that, they should acquiesce. If the established religion, in any country, is absurd and superstitious in the eyes of thinking men, so long as it is the religion of the generality it ought to prevail, and the minority should not even wish to supplant it. The endeavouring to overthrow any system before it is given

up by the majority is faction; the endeavouring to keep it after it is given up by them is tyranny; both are equally wrong, and both proceed from the same cause,—the want of a principle of due subordination.

If we find reason to be satisfied with the general sketch and outline of government, and with that basis of subordination on which we have placed it, it becomes us next to examine, whether the filling up of the plan be equally unexceptionable. Our laws, are they mild, equal, and perspicuous; free from burdensome forms and unnecessary delays; not a succession of expedients growing out of temporary exigences, but a compact whole; not adapted to local prejudices, but founded on the broad basis of universal jurisprudence?—Are they accessible to rich and poor, sparing of human blood, calculated rather to check and set bounds to the inequality of fortunes than to increase them, rather to prevent and reform crimes than to punish them?—If good, are they well administered?—Is the lenity of the laws shown in the moderation of the penalties, or in the facility of evasion and the frequency of escape?—Do we profit from greater degrees of instruction and longer experience, and from time to time clear away the trash and refuse of past ages? What all are bound to observe, are they so framed as that all may understand?—Is there any provi-

sion for instructing the people in the various arbitrary obligations that are laid upon them, or are they supposed to understand them by intuition, because they are too intricate to be explained methodically?—Are punishments proportioned to crimes, and rewards to services; or have we two sets of officers, the one to do the work, the other to be paid without doing it?—Have we any locusts in the land, any who devour the labours of the husbandman without contributing any thing to the good of society by their labours of body or of mind?—Is the name of God, and the awfulness of religious sanctions, profaned among us by frequent, unnecessary, and ensnaring oaths, which lie like stumbling blocks in every path of business and preferment, tending to corrupt the singleness of truth, and wear away the delicacy of conscience; entangling even the innocence and inexperience of children?—Have we calculated the false oaths which, in the space of one sun, the accusing angel has to carry up from our custom-houses, our various courts, our hustings, our offices of taxation, and—from our altars?—Are they such as a tear, if we do shed tears on a day such as this, will blot out?—Have we calculated the mischief which is done to the ingenuous mind, when the virgin dignity of his soul is first violated by a falsehood?—Have we calculated the wound which is given to the peace of a good

man, the thorns that are strewed upon his pillow, when, through hard necessity, he complies with what his soul abhors? Have we calculated the harm done to the morals of a nation by the established necessity of perjury? We shall do well, being now by the command of our rulers before the Lord, to reflect on these things; and if we want food for our national penitence, perhaps we may here find it.

Extravagance is a fault, to which nations, as well as private persons, are very prone, and the consequences to both are exactly similar. If a private man lives beyond his income, the consequence will be loss of independence, disgraceful perplexity, and in the end certain ruin. The catastrophes of states are slower in ripening, but like causes must in the end produce like effects. If you are acquainted with any individual, who, from inattention to his affairs, misplaced confidence, foolish law-suits, anticipation of his rents, and profusion in his family expenses, has involved himself in debts that eat away his income,—what would you say to such a one? Would you not tell him, Contract your expenses; look yourself into your affairs; insist upon exact accounts from your steward and bailiffs; keep no servants for mere show and parade; mind only your own affairs, and keep at peace with your neighbours; set religiously apart an annual sum for discharging

the mortgages on your estate.—If this be good advice for one man, it is good advice for nine millions of men. If this individual should persist in his course of unthrifty profusion, saying to himself, The ruin will not come in my time; the misery will not fall upon me; let posterity take care of itself! would you not pronounce him at once very weak and very selfish? My friends, a nation that should pursue the same conduct, would be equally reprehensible.

Pride is a vice in individuals; it cannot, therefore, be a virtue in that number of individuals called a nation. A disposition to prefer to every other our own habits of life, our own management, our own systems, to suppose that we are admired and looked up to by others—something of this perhaps is natural, and may be pardoned as a weakness, but it can never be exalted into a duty; it is a disposition we ought to check, and not to cultivate: there is neither patriotism nor good sense in fostering an extravagant opinion of ourselves and our own institutions, in being attached even to our faults, because they are ours, and because they have been ours from generation to generation. An exclusive admiration of ourselves is generally founded on extreme ignorance, and it is not likely to produce any thing of a more liberal or better stamp.

Amongst our national faults, have we any in-

stances of cruelty or oppression to repent of? Can we look round from sea to sea, and from east to west, and say, that our brother hath not aught against us? If such instances do not exist under our immediate eye, do they exist any where under our influence and jurisdiction? There are some, whose nerves, rather than whose principles, cannot bear cruelty—like other nuisances, they would not choose it in sight, but they can be well content to know it exists, and that they are indebted for it to the increase of their income, and the luxuries of their table. Are there not some darker-coloured children of the same family, over whom we assume a hard and unjust controul? And have not these our brethren aught against us? If we suspect they have, would it not become us anxiously to inquire into the truth, that we may deliver our souls; but if we know it, and cannot help knowing it, if such enormities have been pressed and forced upon our notice, till they are become flat and stale in the public ear, from fulness and repetition, and satiety of proof; and if they are still sanctioned by our legislature, defended by our princes—deep indeed is the colour of our guilt. And do we appoint fasts, and make pretences to religion? Do we pretend to be shocked at the principles or the practices of neighbouring nations, and start with affected horror at the name of Atheist? Are our con-

sciences so tender, and our hearts so hard? Is it possible we should meet as a nation, and knowing ourselves to be guilty of these things, have the confidence to implore the blessing of God upon our commerce and our colonies: preface with prayer our legislative meetings, and then deliberate how long we shall continue human sacrifices? Rather let us

Never pray more, abandon all remorse.

Let us lay aside the grimace of hypocrisy, stand up for what we are, and boldly profess, like the emperor of old, that every thing is sweet from which money is extracted, and that we know better than to deprive ourselves of a gain for the sake of a fellow-creature.

I next invite you, my friends, to consider your conduct with regard to other states. Different communities are neighbours, living together in a state of nature; that is, without any common tribunal to which they may carry their differences; but they are not the less bound to all the duties of neighbours,—to mutual sincerity, justice, and kind offices.

First, to sincerity. It is imagined, I know not why, that transactions between states cannot be carried on without a great deal of intrigue and dissimulation. But I am apt to think the nation that should venture to disclaim this narrow and crooked policy, and should act and speak with a

noble frankness, would lose nothing by the proceeding; honest intentions will bear to be told in plain language: if our views upon each other are for our mutual advantage, the whole mystery of them may be unfolded without danger; and if they are not, they will soon be detected by practitioners as cunning and dextrous as ourselves.

Secondly, we are bound to justice—not only in executing our engagements, but in cultivating a spirit of moderation in our very wishes. Most contrary to this is a species of patriotism, which consists in inverting the natural course of our feelings, in being afraid of our neighbour's prosperity, and rejoicing at his misfortunes. We should be ashamed to say, My neighbour's house was burnt down last night, I am glad of it, I shall have more custom to my shop. My neighbour, thank God, has broken his arm, I shall be sent for to attend the families in which he was employed;—but we are not ashamed to say, Our neighbours are weakening themselves by a cruel war, we shall rise upon their ruins. We must act in opposition to the peacemakers; we must hinder them from being reconciled, and blow the coals of discord, otherwise their commerce will revive, and goods may remain in our crammed warehouses. Our neighbours have bad laws and a weak government: Heaven forbid they should change them! for then they might be more flourish-

ing than ourselves. We have tracts of territory which we cannot people for ages, but we must take great care that our neighbour does not get any footing there, for he would soon make them very useful to him.—Thus do we extend our grasping hands from east to west, from pole to pole; and in our selfish monopolizing spirit are almost angry that the sun should ripen any productions but for our markets, or the ocean bear any vessels but our own upon its broad bosom. We are not ashamed to use that solecism in terms *natural enemies;* as if nature, and not our own bad passions, made us enemies; as if that relation, from which, in private life, flows confidence, affection, endearing intercourse, were in nations only a signal for mutual slaughter; and we were like animals of prey, solitarily ferocious, who look with a jealous eye on every rival that intrudes within their range of devastation—and yet this language is heard in a christian country, and these detestable maxims veil themselves under the semblance of virtue and public spirit. We have a golden rule, if we will but apply it: it will measure great things as well as small; it will measure as true at the Antipodes, or on the coast of Guinea, as in our native fields. It is that universal standard of weights and measures which alone will simplify all business: Do to others, as ye would that others should do unto you.

There is a notion which has a direct tendency to make us unjust, because it tends to make us think God so; I mean the idea which most nations have entertained, that they are the peculiar favourites of Heaven. We nourish our pride by fondly fancying that we are the only nation for whom the providence of God exerts itself; the only nation whose form of worship is agreeable to him; the only nation whom he has endowed with a competent share of wisdom to frame wise laws and rational governments. Each nation is to itself the fleece of Gideon, and drinks exclusively the dew of science: but as God is no respecter of persons, so neither is he of nations; he has not, like earthly monarchs, his favourites. There is a great deal even in our thanksgivings which is exceptionable on this account; "God, we thank thee, that we are not like other nations;" —yet we freely load ourselves with every degree of guilt; but then we like to consider ourselves as a child that is chidden, and others as outcasts.

When the workings of these bad passions are swelled to their height by mutual animosity and opposition, war ensues. War is a state in which all our feelings and our duties suffer a total and strange inversion; a state in which

> Life dies, Death lives, and Nature breeds
> Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things.

A state in which it becomes our business to hurt

and annoy our neighbour by every possible means; instead of cultivating, to destroy; instead of building, to pull down; instead of peopling, to depopulate: a state in which we drink the tears, and feed upon the misery of our fellow-creatures. Such a state, therefore, requires the extremest necessity to justify it; it ought not to be the common and usual state of society. As both parties cannot be in the right, there is always an equal chance at least, to either of them, of being in the wrong; but as both parties may be to blame, and most commonly are, the chance is very great indeed against its being entered into from any adequate cause; yet war may be said to be, with regard to nations, the sin which most easily besets them. We, my friends, in common with other nations, have much guilt to repent of from this cause, and it ought to make a large part of our humiliations on this day. When we carry our eyes back through the long records of our history, we see wars of plunder, wars of conquest, wars of religion, wars of pride, wars of succession, wars of idle speculation, wars of unjust interference; and hardly among them one war of necessary self-defence in any of our essential or very important interests. Of late years, indeed, we have known none of the calamities of war in our own country but the wasteful expense of it; and sitting aloof from those circumstances of personal

provocation, which in some measure might excuse its fury, we have calmly voted slaughter and merchandized destruction—so much blood and tears for so many rupees, or dollars, or ingots. Our wars have been wars of cool calculating interest, as free from hatred as from love of mankind; the passions which stir the blood have had no share in them. We devote a certain number of men to perish on land and sea, and the rest of us sleep sound, and, protected in our usual occupations, talk of the events of war as what diversifies the flat uniformity of life.

We should, therefore, do well to translate this word war into language more intelligible to us. When we pay our army and our navy estimates, let us set down—so much for killing, so much for maiming, so much for making widows and orphans, so much for bringing famine upon a district, so much for corrupting citizens and subjects into spies and traitors, so much for ruining industrious tradesmen and making bankrupts (of that species of distress at least, we can form an idea), so much for letting loose the dæmons of fury rapine and lust within the fold of cultivated society, and giving to the brutal ferocity of the most ferocious, its full scope and range of invention. We shall by this means know what we have paid our money for, whether we have made a good bargain, and whether the account is likely

to pass—elsewhere. We must take in too, all those concomitant circumstances which make war, considered as battle, the least part of itself, *pars minima sui.* We must fix our eyes, not on the hero returning with conquest, nor yet on the gallant officer dying in the bed of honour,—the subject of picture and of song,—but on the private soldier, forced into the service, exhausted by camp-sickness and fatigue; pale, emaciated, crawling to an hospital with the prospect of life, perhaps a long life, blasted, useless and suffering. We must think of the uncounted tears of her who weeps alone, because the only being who shared her sentiments is taken from her; no martial music sounds in unison with her feelings; the long day passes, and he returns not. She does not shed her sorrows over his grave, for she has never learnt whether he ever had one. If he had returned, his exertions would not have been remembered individually, for he only made a small imperceptible part of a human machine, called a regiment. We must take in the long sickness, which no glory soothes, occasioned by distress of mind, anxiety and ruined fortunes. These are not fancy-pictures; and if you please to heighten them, you can every one of you do it for yourselves. We must take in the consequences, felt perhaps for ages, before a country which has been completely desolated, lifts its head again; like a

torrent of lava, its worst mischief is not the first overwhelming ruin of towns and palaces, but the long sterility to which it condemns the tract it has covered with its stream. Add the danger to regular governments which are changed by war, sometimes to anarchy, and sometimes to despotism. Add all these, and then let us think when a general performing these exploits, is saluted with "Well done, good and faithful servant," whether the plaudit is likely to be echoed in another place.

In this guilty business there is a circumstance which greatly aggravates its guilt, and that is the impiety of calling upon the Divine Being to assist us in it. Almost all nations have been in the habit of mixing with their bad passions a show of religion, and of prefacing these their murders with prayers and the solemnities of worship. When they send out their armies to desolate a country and destroy the fair face of nature, they have the presumption to hope that the Sovereign of the Universe will condescend to be their auxiliary, and to enter into their petty and despicable contests. Their prayer, if put into plain language, would run thus: God of love, father of all the families of the earth, we are going to tear in pieces our brethren of mankind, but our strength is not equal to our fury, we beseech thee to assist us in the work of slaughter. Go out, we pray thee, with

our fleets and armies; we call them christian, and we have interwoven in our banners and the decorations of our arms the symbols of a suffering religion, that we may fight under the cross upon which our Saviour died. Whatever mischief we do, we shall do it in thy name; we hope, therefore, thou wilt protect us in it. Thou, who hast made of one blood all the dwellers upon the earth, we trust thou wilt view us alone with partial favour, and enable us to bring misery upon every other quarter of the globe.—Now if we really expect such prayers to be answered, we are the weakest, if not, we are the most hypocritical of beings.

Formerly, this business was managed better, and had in it more show of reason and probability. When mankind conceived of their gods as partaking of like passions with themselves, they made a fair bargain with them on these occasions. Their chieftains, they knew, were influenced by such motives, and they thought their gods might well be so too. Go out with us, and you shall have a share of the spoil. Your altars shall stream with the blood of so many noble captives; or you shall have a hecatomb of fat oxen, or a golden tripod. Have we any thing of this kind to propose? Can we make any thing like a handsome offer to the Almighty, to tempt him to enlist himself on our side? Such things have been done

before now in the christian world. Churches have been promised, and church lands,—aye, and honestly paid too; at other times silver shrines, incense, vestments, tapers, according to the occasion. Oh how justly may the awful text be here applied! "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision." Christians! I shudder, lest in the earnestness of my heart I may have sinned, in suffering such impious propositions to escape my lips. In short, while we must be perfectly conscious in our own minds, that the generality of our wars are the offspring of mere worldly ambition and interest, let us, if we must have wars, carry them on as other such things are carried on; and not think of making a prayer to be used before murder, any more than of composing prayers to be used before we enter a gambling-house, or a place of licentious entertainment. Bad actions are made worse by hypocrisy: an unjust war is in itself so bad a thing, that there is only one way of making it worse,—and that is, by mixing religion with it.

These, my friends, are some of the topics on which, standing as a nation this day before the Lord, it will be proper that we should examine ourselves. There yet remains a serious question: How far, as individuals, are we really answerable for the guilt of national sins? For his own sins, it is evident, every man is wholly answerable; for

those of an aggregate body, it is as evident he can be only answerable in part; and that portion and measure of iniquity, which falls to his share, will be more or less, according as he has been more or less deeply engaged in those transactions which are polluted with it. There is an active and a passive concurrence. We give our active concurrence to any measure, when we support it by any voluntary exertion, or bestow on it any mark of approbation; when, especially, we are the persons for whose sake, and for whose emolument, systems of injustice or cruelty are carried on. The man of wealth and influence, who feeds and fattens upon the miseries of his fellow-creatures; the man in power, who plans abuses, or prevents their being swept away, is the very Jonas of the ship, and ought this day to stand foremost in the rank of national penitents. But there is also a passive concurrence; and this, in common cases, the community appears to have a right to expect from us. Society could not exist, if every individual took it upon himself not only to judge, but to act from his own judgement in those things in which a nation acts collectively. The law, therefore, which is the expression of the general will, seems to be a sufficient sanction for us, when, in obedience to its authority, we pay taxes, and comply with injunctions, in support of measures which we believe to be hurtful, and even iniqui-

tous; and this, not because the guilt of a bad action, as some fondly imagine, is diluted and washed away in the guilt of multitudes; but because it is a necessary condition of political union, that private will should be yielded up to the will of the public. We shall do well, however, to bear in mind the principle on which we comply, that we may not go a step beyond it.

There are, indeed, cases of such atrocity, that even this concurrence would be criminal. What these are, it is impossible to specify; every man must draw the line for himself.—I suppose no one will pretend, that any maxims of military subordination could justify the officers of Herod in the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem; and certainly the orders of Louvois, in the Palatinate, and of Catherine de' Medici, on the day of St. Bartholomew, were not less cruel. In our own country, it has been the official duty of magistrates to burn alive quiet and innocent subjects, who differed from them in opinion. Rather than fulfill such duties, a man of integrity will prepare himself to suffer, and a christian knows where such sufferings will be rewarded.—The honourable delinquency of those who have submitted to be the victims, rather than the instruments of injustice, has ever been held worthy of praise and admiration.

But though, for the sake of peace and order,

we ought, in general cases, to give our passive concurrence to measures which we may think wrong, peace and order do not require us to give them the sanction of our approbation. On the contrary, the more strictly we are bound to acquiesce, the more it is incumbent on us to remonstrate. Every good man owes it to his country and to his own character, to lift his voice against a ruinous war, an unequal tax, or an edict of persecution; and to oppose them, temperately, but firmly, by all the means in his power: and indeed this is the only way reformations can ever be brought about, or that government can enjoy the advantage of general opinion.

This general opinion has, on a recent occasion, been sedulously called for, and most of you have complied with the requisition. You, who have on this occasion given warm and unqualified declarations of attachment to the existing systems, you have done well—You, who have denounced abuses, and declared your wishes for reform, you have done well likewise, provided each of you has acted from the sincere, unbiassed conviction of his own mind. But if you have done it lightly, and without judgement, you have done ill; if against judgement, worse: if, by any improper influence, you have interfered with the liberty of your neighbour, or your dependent, and caused him to act against his judgement and his con-

science—worse still. If the ferment of party has stirred up a spirit of rancour and animosity among friends and townsmen, or introduced the poison of distrust amidst the freedom and security of social life, we stand this day before the Lord; and if our brother hath ought against us, "let us go first, and be reconciled to our brother, and then come and offer our gift."

If any of us have disturbed or misled weaker minds by exaggerated danger and affected alarm, and, practising on their credulity or their ignorance, have raised passions which it would have better become us to have moderated—or if, on the other hand, we have cried, "Peace, peace, where there is no peace"—we are this day before the Lord, let shame and remorse for these practices make a distinguished part of our national humiliation.

Repent this day, not only of the actual evil you have done, but of the evil of which your actions have been the cause.—If you slander a good man, you are answerable for all the violence of which that slander may be the remote cause; if you raise undue prejudices against any particular class or description of citizens, and they suffer through the bad passions your misrepresentations have worked up against them, you are answerable for the injury, though you have not wielded the bludgeon, or applied the firebrand; if you place power in improper hands, you are answer-

able for the abuse of that power; if you oppose conciliatory measures, you are answerable for the distress which more violent ones may produce. If you use intemperate invectives and inflammatory declamation, you are answerable if others shed blood. It is not sufficient, even if our intentions are pure; we must weigh the tendencies of our actions, for we are answerable, in a degree at least, for those remote consequences which, though we did not intend, we might have foreseen. If we inculcate the plausible doctrine of unlimited confidence, we draw upon ourselves the responsibility of all the future measures which that confidence may sanction. If we introduce tenets leaning towards arbitrary power, the generations to come will have a right to curse the folly of their forefathers, when they are reaping the bitter fruits of them in future star-chambers, and courts of inquisitorial jurisdiction. If the precious sands of our liberty are, perhaps, of themselves running out, how shall we be justified to ourselves or to posterity, if, with a rash hand, we shake the glass.

If, on the other hand, through vanity, a childish love of novelty, a spirit of perverse opposition, or any motive still more sordidly selfish, we are precipitated into measures which ought to be the result of the most serious consideration—if by "foolish talking or jestings, which are not

convenient," we have lessened the reverence due to constituted authorities, or slackened the bonds which hold society together; ours is the blame, when the hurricane is abroad in the world, and doing its work of mischief.

The course of events in this country has now, for a number of generations, for a long reach, as it were, of the stream of time, run smooth, and our political duties have been proportionally easy; but it may not always be so. A sudden bend may change the direction of the current, and open scenes less calm. It becomes every man, therefore, to examine his principles, whether they are of that firmness and texture as suits the occasion he may have for them. If we want a light gondola to float upon a summer lake, we look at the form and gilding; but if a vessel to steer through storms, we examine the strength of the timbers, and the soundness of the bottom. We want principles, not to figure in a book of ethics, or to delight us with "grand and swelling sentiments;" but principles by which we may act and by which we may suffer. Principles of benevolence, to dispose us to real sacrifices; political principles, of practical utility; principles of religion, to comfort and support us under all the trying vicissitudes we see around us, and which we have no security that we shall be long exempt from. How many are there now suffering under

such overwhelming distresses, as, a short time ago, we should have thought it was hardly within the verge of possibility that they should experience! Above all, let us keep our hearts pure, and our hands clean. Whatever part we take in public affairs, much will undoubtedly happen which we could by no means foresee, and much which we shall not be able to justify; the only way, therefore, by which we can avoid deep remorse, is to act with simplicity and singleness of intention, and not to suffer ourselves to be warped, though by ever so little, from the path which honour and conscience approve.

Principles, such as I have been recommending, are not the work of a day; they are not to be acquired by any formal act of worship, or manual of devotion adapted to the exigency; and it will little avail us, that we have stood here, as a nation, before the Lord, if, individually, we do not remember that we are always so.

REMARKS

ON

MR. GILBERT WAKEFIELD'S

ENQUIRY

INTO THE

EXPEDIENCY AND PROPRIETY

OF

PUBLIC OR SOCIAL WORSHIP.

.....in swarming cities vast,
Assembled men, to the deep organ join
The long resounding voice, oft breaking clear,
At solemn pauses, through the swelling base;
And, as each mingling flame increases each,
In one united ardour rise to heaven.

THOMPSON.

REMARKS

ON

MR. WAKEFIELD'S ENQUIRY.

THERE are some practices which have not been defended because they have never been attacked. Of this number is public or social worship. It has been recommended, urged, enforced, but never vindicated. Through worldliness, scepticism, indolence, dissatisfaction with the manner of conducting it, it has been often neglected; but it is a new thing to hear it condemned. The pious and the good have lamented its insufficiency to the reformation of the world, but they were yet to learn that it was unfriendly to it. Satisfied with silent and solitary desertion, those who did not concur in the homage paid by their fellow-citizens were content to acquiesce in its propriety, and had not hitherto assumed the dignity of a sect. A late pamphlet of Mr. Wakefield's has therefore excited the attention of the public, partly, no doubt, from the known abilities of the author, but still more from the novelty and strangeness of the doctrine. If intended as an apology,

no publication can be more seasonable; but if meant as an exhortation, or rather a dehortation, it is a labour which many will think, from the complexion of the times and the tendencies of increasing habits, might well have been spared. It is an awkward circumstance for the apostle of such a persuasion, that he will have many practical disciples whom he will hardly care to own; and that if he succeeds in making proselytes, he must take them from the more sober and orderly part of the community; and class them, as far as this circumstance affords a distinction, along with the uneducated, the profligate, and the unprincipled. The negative tenet he inculcates does not mark his converts with sufficient precision: their scrupulosity will be in danger of being confounded with the carelessness of their neighbours; and it will be always necessary to ask, Do you abstain because you are of this religion, or because you are of no religion at all?

It would be unfair, however, to endeavour to render Mr. Wakefield's opinions invidious; they, as well as every other opinion, must be submitted to the test of argument; and public worship, as well as every other practice, must stand on the basis of utility and good sense, or it must not stand at all: and in the latter case, it is immaterial whether it is left to moulder like the neglected ruin, or battered down like the formidable tower.

It will stand upon this basis, if it can be shown

to be agreeable to our nature, sanctioned by universal practice, countenanced by revealed religion, and that its tendencies are favourable to the morals and manners of mankind.

What is public worship? Kneeling down together while prayers are said of a certain length and construction, and hearing discourses made to a sentence of Scripture called a text!—Such might be the definition of an unenlightened person, but such would certainly not be Mr. Wakefield's. The question ought to be agitated on much larger ground. If these practices are shown to be novel, it does not follow that public worship is so, in that extensive sense which includes all modes and varieties of expression. To establish its antiquity, we must therefore investigate its nature.

Public worship is the public expression of homage to the Sovereign of the Universe. It is that tribute from men united in families, in towns, in communities, which individually men owe to their Maker. Every nation has therefore found some organ by which to express this homage, some language, rite, or symbol, by which to make known their religious feelings; but this organ has not always, nor chiefly, been words. The killing an animal, the throwing a few grains of incense into the fire, the eating bread and drinking wine, are all in themselves indifferent actions, and have apparently little connexion with devo-

tion; yet all of these have been used as worship, and are worship when used with that intention. The solemn sacrifices and anniversary festivals of the Jews, at which their capital and their temple were thronged with votaries from every distant part of the kingdom, were splendid expressions of their religious homage. Their worship, indeed, was interwoven with their whole civil constitution; and so, though in a subordinate degree, was that of the Greeks and Romans, and most of the states of antiquity. There has never existed a nation, at all civilized, which has not had some appointed form of supplication, some stated mode of signifying the dependence we are under to the Supreme Being, and as a nation imploring his protection. It is not pretended that these modes were all equally rational, equally edifying, equally proper for imitation, equally suitable for every state of society; they have varied according as a nation was more or less advanced in refinement and decorum, more or less addicted to symbolical expression—to violent gesticulation—and more or less conversant with abstract ideas and metaphysical speculation. But whether the Deity is worshiped by strewing flowers and building tabernacles of verdure; by dances round the altar, and the shouts of a cheerful people; by offering the first-fruits of harvest, and partaking in the social feast; by tones of music, interpreted only by the

heart; or by verbal expressions of gratitude and adoration—whether the hallelujahs of assembled multitudes rise together in solemn chorus; or whether they listen with composed and reverential attention to the voice of one man, appointed by them to be the organ of their feelings—whether a number of people meet together like the Quakers, and each in silence prefers his mental petition—wherever men together perform a stated act as an expression of homage to their Maker, there is the essence of public worship; and public worship has therefore this mark of being agreeable to the nature of man,—that it has been found agreeable to the sense of mankind in all ages and nations.

It is, indeed, difficult to imagine that beings, sensible of common wants and a common nature, should not join together in imploring common blessings; that, prone as men are in every other circumstance to associate together, and communicate the electric fire of correspondent feelings, they should act with unsocial reserve only where those interests are concerned which are confessedly the most important. Such is the temperament of man, that in every act and every event he anxiously looks around him to claim the gratulation or sympathy of his fellows. Religion, says Mr. Wakefield, is a personal thing: so is marriage, so is the birth of a child, so is the loss of a beloved relative; yet on all these occasions

we are strongly impelled to public solemnization. We neither laugh alone, nor weep alone,—why then should we pray alone? None of our feelings are of a more communicable nature than our religious ones. If devotion really exists in the heart of each individual, it is morally impossible it should exist there apart and single. So many separate tapers, burning so near each other, in the very nature of things must catch, and spread into one common flame. The reciprocal advantages, which public and private worship possess over each other, are sufficiently obvious to make both desirable. While the former is more animated, the latter comes more intimately home to our own circumstances and feelings, and allows our devotion to be more particular and appropriated. To most of the objections made against the one, the other is equally liable. Superstition can drop her solitary beads, as well as vociferate the repetition of a public collect: if symptoms of weariness and inattention may be observed in our churches, we have only to look into the diaries of the most pious christians, and we shall find still heavier complaints of the dullness and deadness of their spiritual frame: the thoughts may wander in the closet when the door is shut: folly and selfishness will send up improper petitions from the cell as well as from the congregation. Nay, public worship has this great advantage,—that it

teaches those to pray, who, not being accustomed to think, cannot of themselves pray with judgement. To all, it teaches that we are not to pray for exclusive advantages, but to consider ourselves as members of a community. Our inmost wishes learn restraint while our petitions are thus directed, and our desires by degrees conform themselves to that spirit of moderation and justice, without which we cannot join in the comprehensive prayer, that must include the joint supplications of a numerous assembly. Public worship has this further advantage over private, that it is better secured against languor on one side, and enthusiasm on the other. If the devotional sentiment has not taken deep root in his mind, a man will scarcely keep up, in silence and in solitude, an intercourse to which he is prompted by no external appearance, and of which he is reminded by no circumstance of time or place. And if his sense of invisible things is strong enough to engage his mind in spite of these disadvantages, there is room to fear, lest, by brooding in silence over objects of such indistinct vastness, his bewildered ideas and exalted imagination should lead him to the reveries of mysticism; an extreme no less to be dreaded than that of indifference. When Mr. Wakefield, to strengthen his argument for seclusion in our religious exercises, directs our attention to the mount of Olives and the garden

of Gethsemane, he should recollect that our Saviour sustained a character to which we cannot presume to aspire; and that, however favourable the desert and the wilderness have been to prophets visited by extraordinary illuminations, they cannot be equally suitable to the regular devotion of ordinary christians. From the gloom of the cloister and the loneliness of the cell have proceeded the most extravagant deviations from nature and from reason. Enthusiasm is indeed most dangerous in a crowd, but it seldom originates there. The mind, heated with intense thinking, adopts illusions to which it is not exposed when its devotion is guided and bounded by addresses which are intended to meet the common sentiments of a numerous assembly. Religion then appears with the most benignant aspect, is then least likely to be mistaken, when the presence of our fellow-creatures points out its connexion with the businesses of life and the duties of society. Solitary devotion, for worldly minds, is insufficient, for weak minds it is not profitable, for ardent minds it is not safe.

We must however do that justice to the author of the Enquiry, as to confess that he betrays no disposition to carry these exercises to any extreme. On the contrary, some of his expressions seem to strike at the root of all prayer, properly so called, as being the weak effort of an infirm and unphilo-

sophical mind to alter the order of nature and the decrees of Providence, in which it rather becomes the wise man to acquiesce with a manly resignation. Without entering into a discussion, in which, perhaps, we might misrepresent his sentiments; as, in the greater part of his pamphlet, he has taken the ground of Scripture, which undoubtedly countenances the earnestness, and almost the importunity of petition; it may be sufficient for the present purpose to observe, that if there exists a man who, believing himself to be in the continual presence of Infinite Power, directed by infinite love and tender compassion to all his creatures—thinking often of this Being, and habitually referring every disposition of events to his providence—feeling himself more constantly and intimately connected with him than with all creation besides—can in every vicissitude of his life; in sickness and in sorrow, in imminent danger, anxious uncertainty, desertion or loss of friends, and all the trying circumstances of humanity that flesh is heir to; forbear, for himself or for those dearer to him than himself, to put up one petition to the throne of God,—such a one may be allowed to strike out every petition in the Lord's Prayer but that comprehensive one, "thy will be done." If his faith be equally lively, his devotional feelings equally fervent, his sense of dependence upon God equally felt in his inmost soul, we dare

not presume to censure the temperance of his religious addresses. We respect the subdued sobriety of his wishes; and we do not, we cannot suppose him deserted by the Supreme Being for that modest forbearance which proceeds from a resignation so absolute and complete. Others, however, whose philosophy is not of so firm a texture, may plead the example of him who prayed, though with meek submission, that the cup of bitterness might pass from him; and who, as the moment of separation approached, interceded for his friends and followers with all the anxiety of affectionate tenderness. But we will venture to say that practically there is no such philosopher. If prayer were not enjoined for the perfection, it would be permitted to the weakness of our nature. We should be betrayed into it, if we thought it sin; and pious ejaculations would escape our lips, though we were obliged to preface them with, God forgive me for praying!

To those who press the objection, that we cannot see in what manner our prayers can be answered, consistently with the government of the world according to those general laws by which we find, in fact, that it is governed; it may be sufficient to say, that prayer, being made almost an instinct of our nature, it cannot be supposed but that, like all other instincts, it has its use; that no idea can be less philosophical than one

which implies, that the existence of a God who governs the world, should make no difference in our conduct; and few things less probable, than that the child-like submission which bows to the will of a father, should be exactly similar in feature to the stubborn patience which bends under the yoke of necessity.

It may be further observed, that petitions for temporal advantages,—such, I mean, as a spirit of moderation will allow us to wish with sufficient ardour to make them the subject of our prayers,—are not liable to more objections than petitions for spiritual blessings. In either case the weak man does, and the wise man does not expect a miracle. That the arrogant, the worldly, and the licentious, should on a sudden, and without their own strenuous endeavours, be rendered humble, simple-minded, and pure of heart, would be as great a violation of the order of nature in the moral world, as it would be in the natural world that the harvest should ripen without the co-operation of the husbandman, and the slow influence of the seasons. Indeed, as temporal blessings are less in our power than dispositions, and are sometimes entirely out of it, it seems more reasonable of the two to pray for the former than for the latter; and it is remarkable that, in the model given us in the Lord's Prayer, there is not a single petition for any virtue or good disposition, but there is one for daily bread.

Good dispositions, particularly a spirit of resignation, are declared and implied in the petitions, but they are not prayed for: events are prayed for, and circumstances out of our own power, relative to our spiritual concerns, are prayed for,—as, the not being led into temptation; but there is no prayer that we may be made holy, meek, or merciful. Nor is it an objection to praying for health, that sickness may possibly turn out a blessing, since it is no objection to the using all the means in our power to get rid of sickness, which we do as eagerly and as unreservedly as if we had not the least idea that it ever could be salutary. And we do right; for the advantages of sickness are casual and adventitious; but health is in itself, and in its natural tendencies, a blessing devoutly to be wished for. That no advantage of this nature ought to be prayed or wished for, unqualified with the deepest submission to the will of God, is an undoubted truth; and it is a truth likewise universally acknowledged by all rational christians.

It cannot be denied, however, that great reserve is necessary in putting up specific petitions, especially of a public nature; but generally the fault lies in our engaging in wrong pursuits, rather than in imploring upon our pursuits the favour of Heaven. Humanity is shocked to hear prayers for the success of an unjust war; but hu-

manity and Heaven were then offended when the war was engaged in; for war is of a nature sufficiently serious to warrant our prayers to be preserved from the calamities of it, if we have not voluntarily exposed ourselves to them. The frivolous nature of most national contests appears strongly in this very circumstance, that petitions from either side have the air of a profanation; but if in some serious conjuncture our country was ready to be overwhelmed by an ambitious neighbour,—as that of the Dutch was in the time of Louis the Fourteenth,—in such a season of calamity, the sternest philosopher would give way to the instinctive dictates of nature, and implore the help which cometh from on high. The reason why both sides cannot pray with propriety, is because both sides cannot act with justice.

But supposing we were to discard all petition as the weak effort of infirm minds to alter the unbroken chain of events; as the impatient breathings of craving and restless spirits, not broken into patient acquiescence with the eternal order of Providence—the noblest office of worship still remains:

> Praise is devotion fit for mighty minds,
> The jarring world's agreeing sacrifice.

And this is surely of a social nature. One class of religious duties separately considered, tends to depress the mind, filling it with ingenu-

ous shame and wholesome sorrow; and to these humiliating feelings solitude might perhaps be found congenial: but the sentiments of admiration, love, and joy, swell the bosom with emotions which seek for fellowship and communication. The flame indeed may be kindled by silent musing; but when kindled it must infallibly spread. The devout heart, penetrated with large and affecting views of the immensity of the works of God, the harmony of his laws, and the extent of his beneficence, bursts into loud and vocal expressions of praise and adoration; and, from a full and overflowing sensibility, seeks to expand itself to the utmost limits of creation. The mind is forcibly carried out of itself; and, embracing the whole circle of animated existence, calls on all above, around, below, to help to bear the burden of its gratitude. Joy is too brilliant a thing to be confined within our own bosoms; it burnishes all nature, and with its vivid colouring gives a kind of factitious life to objects without sense or motion. There cannot be a more striking proof of the social tendency of these feelings, than the strong propensity we have to suppose auditors where there are none. When men are wanting, we address the animal creation; and, rather than have none to partake our sentiments, we find sentiment in the music of the birds, the hum of insects, and the low of kine: nay, we call on rocks

and streams and forests to witness and share our emotions. Hence the Royal Shepherd, sojourning in caves and solitary wastes, calls on the hills to rejoice and the floods to clap their hands; and the lonely poet, wandering in the deep recesses of uncultivated nature, finds a temple in every solemn grove, and swells his chorus of praise with the winds that bow the lofty cedars. And can he who, not satisfied with the wide range of existence, calls for the sympathy of the inanimate creation, refuse to worship with his fellow-men? Can he who bids "Nature attend," forget to "join every living soul" in the universal hymn? Shall we suppose companions in the stillness of deserts, and shall we overlook them amongst friends and townsmen? It cannot be! Social worship, for the devout heart, is not more a duty than it is a real want.

If Public Worship is thus found to be agreeable to the best impulses of our nature, the pious mind will rejoice to find it, at least not discountenanced by revealed religion. But its friends, in endeavouring to prove this, must carry on the argument under some disadvantage, as Mr. Wakefield, though he lays great stress on the presumptive arguments which seem to favour the negative side of the question, will not allow the same force to those which may be urged on the other side. The practice of Christ, he tells us, is an authority

to which all believers will bow the knee, a tribunal by which all our controversies must be awarded: yet he gives us notice at the same time, that to this authority, if brought against him, he will not bow the knee; and from this tribunal, if unfriendly to his cause, he will appeal; for that prayers and all external observances are beggarly elements, to be laid aside in the present maturity of the christian church; and that, even if social worship were an original appendage of the Gospel, the idea of a "progressive christianity" would justify us in rejecting it. With this inequality of conditions, which it is sufficient just to notice, let us consider the array of texts which are drawn up against the practice in question; and particularly those precepts which, Mr. Wakefield says, are evidences that directly and literally prove public worship to be unauthorized by christianity, and inconsistent with it, and which he distinguishes from those which condemn it merely by inference.

The first of these direct evidences is the injunction, not to worship as the hypocrites, who are fond of exhibiting in the most public places. "And when thou prayest, be not as the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men; verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door,

pray to thy Father who is in secret." But is it not evident, that the force of this precept is not aimed against public prayer, but against private prayer performed in public; against the ostentatious display which seeks to distinguish us from others, not the genuine sympathy which makes us desirous of blending our feelings with theirs? It was devotion obtruding itself in the face of business, amidst the show and bustle of the world. It did not seek for fellowship, but observation. It did not want the concurrence of men, but to be seen by them. Even in the synagogue it was silent, solitary, unsocial, and with sullen reserve and cold disdain kept itself aloof from communion, and invited only applause. The Pharisee and the Publican both went up to the temple to worship, but they worshiped not together. Certainly the delicate and modest nature of sincere piety must shrink from an exhibition like this; and would not wish to have its feelings noticed, but where at the same time they may be shared. This text therefore seems to be only a caution respecting the proper performance of our closet duties.

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship

him. God is a spirit." True it is, the hour is come in which it is allowed by all rational believers, that the acceptableness of prayer does not depend on the sacredness of any particular place. The Jews wanted to be informed of this. They, naturally enough, were apt to consider their temple as the habitation of the Divine Being, in the same manner as a palace is the habitation of an earthly sovereign,—a place where men may come to make their court, and bring presents, and ask favours in return. These ideas have been done away by those more honourable notions of the Divine Being which our Saviour, and good men after him have laboured to inculcate. We conceive of a church as of a building, not for God to reside, but for men to assemble in; for, though God is a spirit, men have bodies, and they cannot meet to do any thing without having some place to do it in. "Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem," means therefore exclusively, with an idea of any peculiar sacredness, or superstitious preference to any other structure which might be equally commodious.

With regard to the character of our Saviour himself, it is certain he did not always call upon his disciples to share that more intimate, and, if I may say so, confidential intercourse with his heavenly Father, which he may be supposed to have been favoured with; and it must be confessed,

there is no formal mention made of any exercises of this kind either with them, or with the people at large. But his whole life was a prayer. He, who in his most familiar and convivial moments was raising the thoughts of his hearers to God, and nourishing their piety by occasional instruction, could not be supposed to leave them disinclined to the intercourses of social piety. The beautiful commendatory prayer which he offered up when about to leave the world, though it was not entirely of the nature of social prayer, as his disciples did not join in it, yet, its being uttered in their presence, and their being the object of it, seems to place it nearly on the same ground. In the very miracle of the loaves, which Mr. Wakefield has produced as an instance of an incident which might have given rise to public prayer, and which was suffered to pass without it—in the account of this very miracle there is a direct precedent for the practice in question; for, looking up to heaven, "he blessed" before he brake the bread. This, indeed, appears to have been his constant practice. It certainly does not belong to private devotion, and is a species of prayer more apt, perhaps, than any other, to degenerate into a mere form.

But if we do not find public worship, properly so called, in the life of our Saviour, it is because we look for it in the wrong place. It is not to be

sought for in his instructions, either to the multitude at large, or to his disciples in their more private conversations. His public worship was paid where the rest of the Jews paid theirs—in the Temple. He came up, with the concourse of assembled multitudes, to the appointed religious festivals; he ate the passover, and associated with his fellow-citizens, even in those rites and that form of worship which he knew was so soon to be abolished.

Our Lord seems indeed to have been an early and regular frequenter of whatever public worship the Jews had among them. What this was, besides their sacrifices and ceremonial observances, Mr. Wakefield is infinitely better able than the author of these remarks to collect from the volumes of Rabbinical learning; but, without going deeper into their antiquities than what may be gathered from those records of their history which are in the hands of every one, it may be seen that verbal addresses to the Divine Being often accompanied the public expressions of their thanksgiving. In their earliest times we have the song of Moses, in the burden of which the whole people, led by Miriam, joined in chorus. In a more polished age, the fine prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the Temple, a composition which has never been excelled, comes yet nearer to our ideas of an address to the Divine Being; and the whole

people bore a part in the worship by the response, "For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever." A still more regular service is recorded by Nehemiah, when the people, after their return from the captivity, entered into that solemn renewal of their law described with so much affecting solemnity. They stood and confessed their sins, then they read the law; after which the Levites called upon them to stand up and bless the Lord their God. They stood up accordingly, and joined in what I suppose the author of the Enquiry would call a pretty long prayer. And when Ezra blessed the Lord, the people answered, Amen, Amen. All this is sufficiently similar not only to the spirit, but to the very routine of our present modes of worship. If it be said, that these instances all arose from peculiar and striking occasions, it may be answered, that it is not likely any other would be recorded; and that the regularity and grace with which they seem to have been performed, indicate a people not unaccustomed to such exercises. Indeed the Psalms of David afford every variety which any of our prayers do; confession, ascription, thanksgiving, &c. These, it should seem, were many of them set to music, and sung with proper responses; for even in the Temple, the chief business of which was not prayer but sacrifice, the Levites and other singers, at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice, sung psalms of

praise to God before the altar, and in the conclusion the priests blessed the people*. And it is not probable, that in a later period of their history, amidst a greater degree of refinement and cultivation, they should have contented themselves with mere ritual observances. This at least is evident, if in the time of our Saviour they had no worship similar to ours, he could not mean by any thing he said to hint a dislike of it; and if they had, he must have sanctioned the practice by conforming to it. But indeed it is acknowledged by most, and Mr. Wakefield seems to admit, that after their return from the Babylonish captivity, when their hearts were purified by adversity and more attached to their religion, they had regular and stated worship in their synagogues, consisting of forms of prayer, reading the Scriptures, and expounding. In the former, we are told, a minister, called from his office the angel or messenger of the church, officiated as the mouth of the congregation; but for the latter part of the service it was usual to call upon any stranger to take his share, who appeared to be sufficiently qualified to read and expound the lessons of the day. And hence probably it was, that our Saviour did not pray in the synagogues, though he often taught there, and interpreted the Scriptures†. Of their forms of prayer eighteen are given, held to be of high

* See Prideaux's Connection, vol. ii. p. 528. † Ibid. p. 538.

antiquity and peculiar sacredness; and these are in a strain not dissimilar to the Liturgies of more modern times. In short, if we trace the accounts given us both of the plan of the service, and of its presbyters, ministers, and deacons, it will be found, that the christian church, in its corresponding officers, its collects, litanies, and expositions, is the legitimate daughter of the Jewish synagogue; and we shall be led to admire the singular fate of a nation, decreed to be at once imitated and despised.

Thus much may be sufficient to say upon a subject which, after all, is purely a question of historical curiosity.

To return to the character of our Saviour. His great business in the world was instruction; and this he dispensed, not in a systematic, but a popular manner; nor yet in a vague and declamatory style, but in a pointed and appropriated one; not where it would most shine, but where it was most wanted. He was the great reformer, the innovator of his day; and the strain of his energetic eloquence was strongly pointed against abuses of all kinds, and precisely those points of duty were most insisted on which he found most neglected. Almost all his discourses are levelled against some prevailing vice of the times, some fashionable worldly maxim, some artful gloss of a well known precept, some evasion of an acknowledged duty. They were delivered as occasion prompted,

and therefore it was that they came so home to men's business and bosoms; for he might have delivered the most elaborate lectures on morality, and religion too, without offending the Scribes and Pharisees, if he had confined himself to system, and not attacked corruption. We shall therefore meet with continual disappointment if, in the few scattered discourses, most of them too conversations, which are preserved to us of our Saviour, we expect to find any thing like a regular code of laws, and still less a formulary of rules. He referred to known laws, and only endeavoured to restore the spirit of them, and to exalt the motive of obedience. The great duty of honouring our parents had probably not found a place in his instructions, but to expose the tradition which had made it of none effect. It is therefore a very inconclusive argument against a practice, either, that we are not expressly enjoined it in the Gospel, or that the abuses of it are strongly dwelt upon; and this may serve for a general answer to Mr. Wakefield's objections built upon the animated denunciations against those who, for a pretence, make long prayers, and who cry, "Lord, Lord"—against vain repetitions—upon the exhortations to worship in spirit and in truth—the declaration that the Sabbath is made for man, and not man for the Sabbath—with a thousand others in the same strain, with which the Gospel undoubtedly abounds. But

is the utility of a practice destroyed by the abuse of it; or is it of none, because it is not of the chief value? Are none of our duties subordinate, yet real? or have they all the proud motto, *Aut Cæsar aut nullus*.—As to the idea of a "progressive Christianity," on which the author of the Enquiry lays so much stress, as no new revelation has been pretended subsequent to its original promulgation, it is difficult to conceive of any progress in it, distinct from the progress of reason and civilization in the different countries where it may be received. Now I do not know what right we have to suppose that the Jews in the time of our Saviour, were so gross in their ideas as to require a mode of worship which deserves to be stigmatized with the appellation of "beggarly elements and the twilight of superstition." They were probably as different from their countrymen in the time of the Judges, as we are from our ancestors of the Saxon heptarchy. They had long had among them most of those causes which tend to develope the mental powers. A system of laws and polity, writers of the most distinguished excellence, commercial and political intercourse with other nations; they had acute and subtle disputants, and an acquaintance with different sects of philosophy; and, under these circumstances, it is probable that most of those questions would be agitated which, at similar periods, have exercised and perplexed the

human faculties. Be that as it may, Mr. Wakefield, by considering public worship as a practice to be adapted to the exigencies of the times, evidently abandons the textual ground, in which narrow path he seemed hitherto to have trod with such scrupulous precaution, and places it on the broader footing of utility. The utility of this practice therefore comes next to be considered.

It is an error, which is extremely incident to minds of a delicate and anxious sensibility, to suppose that practices do no good which do not all the good that might be expected from them. Let those who, in a desponding mood, are apt to think thus of public worship, calculate, if they can, what would be the consequence if it were laid aside. Perhaps it is not easy to estimate how much of the manners as well as the morals—how much of the cultivation as well as the religion of a people is derived from this very source. If a legislator or philosopher were to undertake the civilization of a horde of wild savages, scattered along the waste in the drear loneliness of individual existence, and averse to the faces of each other—if he had formed a plan to gather them together, and give them a principle of cohesion; he probably could not take a more effectual method than by persuading them to meet together in one place—at regular and stated times—and there to join together in a common act, imposing from its solem-

nity and endearing from the social nature of its exercises. If an adventurer were stranded on some foreign shore, and should find the inhabitants engaged in such an act, he might draw the conclusion, that the blessings of order, internal peace, mutual confidence, and a considerable degree of information, existed there, as surely as the philosopher drew a similar inference from the discovery of mathematical diagrams traced upon the sand. And thus, in fact, it was, that in the early beginnings of society, legislators called in the assistance of religious ideas, and with the charm and melody of solemn hymns, like those of Orpheus or of Linus, gathered round them the stupid, incurious them barbarians, roused them to attention and softened into docility. Agreeably to this train of thinking, our great dramatic moralist places the influences of social worship upon a par with the sacred touches of sympathetic sorrow, and the exhilarating pleasures of the hospitable board, and makes it one of the features which distinguish the urbanity of polished life from the rude and unfeeling ferocity which belongs to a clan of unprincipled banditti.

> If ever you have looked on better days,
> If ever been where bells have knolled to church,
> If ever sate at any good man's feast,
> If ever from your eyelids wiped a tear,
> And known what 'tis to pity and be pitied;
> Let gentleness your strong enforcement be——

For, independent of the peculiar object of public religious assemblies, many collateral advantages are derived from them which the liberal thinker will by no means despise. The recurrence of appointed days of rest and leisure, which, but for this purpose, would never have been appointed, divides the weary months of labour and servitude with a separating line of a brighter colour. The church is a centre of union for neighbours, friends, and townsmen; and it is a reasonable and a pleasing ground of preference in our attachments, that we have "walked to the house of God in company." Even the common greetings that pass between those who meet there, are hallowed by the occasion of the meeting, and the spirit of civic urbanity is mingled with a still sweeter infusion of christian courtesy. By the recurrence of this intercourse, feuds and animosities are composed, which interrupted the harmony of friends and acquaintance: and those who avoided to meet because they could not forgive, are led to forgive, being obliged to meet. Its effect in humanizing the lower orders of society, and fashioning their manners to the order and decorum of civil life, is apparent to every reflecting mind. The poor who have not formed a habit of attending here, remain from week to week in their sordid cells, or issue thence to places of licentiousness more sordid; while those who assemble with the other inhabitants of the

place, are brought into the frequent view of their superiors; their persons are known, their appearance noted; the inquiring eye of benevolence pursues them to their humble cottages, and they are not unfrequently led home from social worship to the social meal. If the rich and poor were but thus brought together regularly and universally, that single circumstance would be found sufficient to remove the squalidness of misery, and the bitterness of want; and poverty would exist only as a sober shade in the picture of life, on which the benevolent eye might rest with a degree of complacency when fatigued with the more gaudy colouring of luxury and show.

The good effect of public worship in this light is remarkably conspicuous in the Sunday-schools. Many of the children who attend have probably not very clearly comprehended any religious system; but the moving and acting under the public eye, together with a sense of duty and moral obligation, which, however obscure, always accompanies the exercises of religion, soon transforms them into a different kind of beings. They acquire a love of neatness and regularity; a sense of propriety insinuates itself into their young minds, and produces, instead of the sullen and untamed licentiousness which at once shuns and hates the restraints of better life, the modest deference and chastened demeanour of those who respect others because they respect themselves.

Public worship conveys a great deal of instruction in an indirect manner. Even those didactic prayers which run out into the enumeration of the attributes of the Divine Being, and of the duties of a virtuous life, though, perhaps, not strictly proper as prayer, have their use in storing the minds of the generality with ideas on these important subjects; and the beauty and sublimity of many of these compositions must operate powerfully in lifting the heart to God, and inspiring it with a love of virtue. Improper as public prayers may have sometimes been, private prayers are likely to be still more so. Whatever contempt Mr. Wakefield may choose to throw on the official abilities of those who lead the service, it will not be denied that they are generally better informed than those who follow. Men to whom spiritual ideas are familiar from reading and study, do not sufficiently appreciate the advantage which the illiterate enjoy by the fellowship and communication of superior minds, who are qualified to lead their ideas in the right track.

Public worship is a means of invigorating faith. Though argument be one means of generating belief, and that on which all belief must ultimately rest, it is not the only means, nor, with many minds, the most efficacious. Practical faith is greatly assisted by joining in some act in which the presence and persuasion of others gives a sort of reality to our perception of invisible things.

The metaphysical reasoner, entangled in the nets of sophistry, may involve himself in the intricacies of contradictory syllogisms till reason grows giddy, and scarcely able to hold the balance; but when he acts in presence of his fellow-creatures, his mind resumes its tone and vigour, and social devotion gives a colour and body to the deductions of his reason. Berkeley, probably, never doubted of the existence of the material world when he had quitted his closet. Some minds are not capable of that firmness of decision which embraces truth upon a bare preponderancy of argument—some, through a timorous and melancholy spirit, remain always in a perplexed and doubting state, if they rest merely on the conclusions built upon their own investigation. But every act in consequence of our faith, strengthens faith. These, when they enter a place of worship, amidst all the animating accompaniments of social homage, are seized with a happy contagion; slow hesitating doubts vanish in a moment, and give way to sincere and cordial feeling. These are not proofs, it is true; but they are helps, adapted to our nature, necessary to the generality, expedient for all. As for the multitude, so unaccustomed are they to any process of abstruse reasoning, and so much do they require the assistance of some object within the grasp of their senses, that it is to be doubted whether they could

be at all persuaded of the existence of a spiritual invisible power, if that existence was not statedly acknowledged by some act which should impress the reality of it upon their minds, by connecting it with places, persons, and times.

Let it be observed, in the next place, that Public Worship is a civic meeting. The temple is the only place where human beings, of every rank and sex and age, meet together for one common purpose, and join together in one common act. Other meetings are either political, or formed for the purposes of splendour and amusement; from both which, in this country, the bulk of inhabitants are of necessity excluded. This is the only place, to enter which nothing more is necessary than to be of the same species;—the only place where man meets man not only as an equal but a brother; and where, by contemplating his duties, he may become sensible of his rights. So high and haughty is the spirit of aristocracy, and such the increasing pride of the privileged classes, that it is to be feared, if men did not attend at the same place here, it would hardly be believed they were meant to go to the same place hereafter. It is of service to the cause of freedom therefore, no less than to that of virtue, that there is one place where the invidious distinctions of wealth and titles are not admitted; where all are equal, not by making the low, proud; but by making the

great, humble. How many a man exists who possesses not the smallest property in this earth of which you call him lord; who, from the narrowing spirit of property, is circumscribed and hemmed in by the possessions of his more opulent neighbours, till there is scarcely an unoccupied spot of verdure on which he can set his foot to admire the beauties of nature, or barren mountain on which he can draw the fresh air without a trespass. The enjoyments of life are for others, the labours of it for him. He hears those of his class spoken of, collectively, as of machines, which are to be kept in repair indeed, but of which the sole use is to raise the happiness of the higher orders. Where, but in the temples of religion, shall he learn that he is of the same species? He hears there (and were it for the first time, it would be with infinite astonishment,) that all are considered as alike ignorant and to be instructed; all alike sinful, and needing forgiveness; all alike bound by the same obligations, and animated by the same hopes. In the intercourses of the world the poor man is seen, but not noticed; he may be in the presence of his superiors, but he cannot be in their company. In every other place it would be presumption in him to let his voice be heard along with theirs; here alone they are both raised together, and blended in the full chorus of praise. In every other place it would be an offence to be

near them, without showing in his attitudes and deportment the conscious marks of inferiority; here only he sees the prostrations of the rich as low as his, and hears them both addressed together in the majestic simplicity of a language that knows no adulation. Here the poor man learns that, in spite of the distinctions of rank, and the apparent inferiority of his condition, all the true goods of life, all that men dare petition for when in the presence of their Maker—a sound mind, a healthful body, and daily bread,—lie within the scope of his own hopes and endeavours; and that in the large inheritance to come, his expectations are no less ample than theirs. He rises from his knees, and feels himself a man. He learns philosophy without its pride, and a spirit of liberty without its turbulence. Every time Social Worship is celebrated, it includes a virtual declaration of the rights of man.

It may be further observed, that the regular services of the church are to us the more necessary, as we have laid aside many of those modes and expressions which gave a tincture of religion to our social intercourse and domestic manners. The regard to particular days and seasons is nearly worn off. The forms of epistolary correspondence, and the friendly salutations which, in the last century, breathed a spirit of affectionate piety, are exchanged for the degrading ceremo-

nial of unmeaning servility. The "God be with you," "God bless you," "If God permit," "Heaven have you in its keeping,"—like the graceful *Salam*, or salutation of peace among the eastern nations, kept up in the mind a sense of the surrounding providence of the Divine Being, and might, in some measure, supersede the necessity of more formal addresses; whereas, in the present state of society, a stranger might pass day after day, and week after week, in the bosom of a christian country, without suspecting the faith of its inhabitants (if public worship were laid aside) from any circumstance, unless it were the obscure, half-pronounced blessing which is still sometimes murmured over the table.

Let it therefore be considered, when the length and abstracted nature of our public prayers is objected to, that we have nothing to take their place. If our attention was excited by processions, garlands, altars, and sacrifices, and every action of our lives intermixed with some religious rite, these expressions of our homage might be more readily dispensed with; but, in reality, tedious as Mr. Wakefield may think long prayers, they suit better with the gravity of the national disposition and the philosophic turn of our ideas, than any substitute which could be suggested by the most classic taste. Our prayers are become long, because our ceremonies are short.

If we may suppose these views of the subject to have established the general utility of public worship, a question still arises, Is the obligation to it universal? Is attendance on its exercises to be expected from those whose own minds are temples more hallowed than any they can enter; and whose knowledge and cultivation render it probable, that in every popular service they will meet with much to object to, and little to interest a taste rendered fastidious by critical accuracy and elegant refinement? Without presuming to condemn the conduct of those who are in every respect so competent to form their own plans according to their own judgement, I would mention some considerations which, even to them, may present it in a light not unworthy their attention. It is, in the first place, an act of homage, and as such equally incumbent on all. It is a profession of faith, less dubious even than the performance of moral duties, which may proceed from a well-directed prudence, or the harmony of a happy temperament. It is right and proper that Religion should have the honour of those who are calculated to do her honour. It is likewise useful for a pious man to be connected with pious people as such. Various associations are formed upon the ground of something which men wish to improve or to enjoy in common. Literary men associate, musical men associate, political men associate to-

gether; and as there is a great deal of the commerce of the world in which it would be impossible to introduce religion, there ought by way of balance to be some society of which that is the ground and principle; otherwise, from the very nature of our connexions with each other, we shall find religion less in our thoughts than almost any thing else in which we have an interest, and insensibly it will waste and die away for mere want of aliment. But the attendance of men of literature and knowledge is perhaps most important from its effect upon others. The unenlightened worship with most pleasure where those worship whose opinions they respect. A religion that is left for the vulgar will not long satisfy even them. There is harshness in saying to the bulk of mankind, "Stand aside, we are wiser than you." There is harshness in saying, "Our affections cannot move in concert; what edifies you, disgusts us; we cannot feel in common, even where we have a common interest." In the intercourses of life, the man of urbanity makes a thousand sacrifices to the conciliating spirit of courtesy and the science of attentions. The exercises of devotion, Mr. Wakefield says, are wearisome. Suppose they were so; how many meetings do we frequent, to how many conversations do we listen with benevolent attention, where our own pleasure and our own improvement are not the

objects to which our time is given up? He who knows much must expect to be often present where he can learn nothing. While others are receiving information, he is practising a virtue. He, who in common life has learned to mix a regard to the feelings and opinions of others with the pursuit of his own gratifications, will bear, in the spirit of love and charity, the instruction which to him is unnecessary, the amplification which to him is tiresome, the deficiencies of method or of elocution, to which his ear and his judgement are acutely sensible; the imperfections, in short, of men or of societies inferior to himself in taste or knowledge;—as in conversation he bears with the communicative overflowings of self-importance, the repetition of the well-known tale, and the recurrence of the numerous, burdensome forms of civilized society.

It becomes us well to consider what would be the consequence, if the desertion of men of superior sense should become general in our assemblies. Not the abolition of public worship,—it is a practice too deeply rooted in the very propensities of our nature; but this would be the consequence, that it would be thrown into the hands of professional men on the one hand, and of uninformed men on the other. By the one it would be corrupted; it would be debased by the other. Let the friends of moderation and good sense consider

whether it is desirable, whether it is even safe, to withdraw from the public the powerful influence of their taste, knowledge, and liberality. Let them consider whether they are prepared to take the consequences of trusting in the hands of any clergy, so powerful an engine as that of public worship and instruction, without the salutary check of their presence who are best able to distinguish truth from falsehood, to detect unwarrantable pretensions, and to keep within tolerable bounds the wanderings of fanaticism. Attentive to the signs of the times, they will have remarked on the one hand, a disposition to give into deception, greater than might naturally have been presumed of this age, which we compliment with the epithet of enlightened. Empiric extravagancies have been adopted, which violate every sober and consistent idea of the laws of nature, and new sects have sprung up distinguished by the wildest reveries of visionary credulity. On the other, they will have observed indications of a desire to discourage the freedom of investigation, to thicken the veil of mystery, and to revive every obsolete pretension of priestly power, which, in the most ignorant periods, the haughtiest churchman has ever dared to assume. They will have read with astonishment an official exhortation to the inferior clergy—it was not fulminated from the Vatican, it was not dragged to light from the mould and rust of remote ages—It

was delivered by an English divine of the eighteenth century, brilliant in parts and high in place: he knew it was to meet the notice and encounter the criticism of an enlightened and philosophic people, and he has not scrupled to tell them—that good works of a heretic are sin; and that such a one may go to hell with his load of moral merit on his back. He has not scrupled to rank the first philosopher of this kingdom, and the man in it perhaps of all others most actively solicitous for the spread of what he at least believes to be genuine christianity, with infidels and atheists; and thus by obvious inference has piously consigned him to the same doom. He has revived claims and opinions which have upon their heads whole centuries of oblivion and contempt; and by slandering Morality, has thought to exalt Religion. —Reflecting on these things, they will consider whether the man of judgement does not desert the post assigned him by Providence, when he withdraws from popular assemblies both the countenance of his example and the imposing awe of his presence; they will conceive themselves as invested with the high commission to take care *ne quid respublica detrimenti capiat;* they will consider themselves as the salt of the earth, the leaven of the lump, not to be secluded in separate parcels, but to be mingled in the whole mass, diffusing through it their own spirit and savour.

The author of the Enquiry chooses to expatiate, —it is not difficult to do it,—on the discordant variety of the different modes of worship practised amongst men, and concludes it with characterizing this alarming schism by the comparison of the poet:

> One likes the pheasant's wing, and one the leg;
> The vulgar boil, the learned roast an egg.

But might we not venture to ask,—Where, pray, is the harm of all this? unless indeed I will not allow my neighbour to boil his egg because I roast mine. Eggs are good and nutritious food either way; and in the manner of dressing them, fancy and taste, nay caprice, if you will, may fairly be consulted. If I prefer the leg of a pheasant, and my neighbour finds it dry, let each take what he likes. It would be a conclusion singularly absurd, that eggs and pheasants were not to be eaten. All the harm is in having but one table for guests of every description; and yet even there, were I at a public ordinary, good in other respects, I would rather conform my taste in some measure to that of my neighbour, than be reduced to the melancholy necessity of eating my morsel by myself alone.

The dissenters cannot be supposed to pass over in silence Mr. Wakefield's strictures upon the manner in which they have chosen to conduct their public and social worship. They are surprised

and sorry to find themselves treated with such a mixture of bitterness and levity by a man whose abilities they respect, and whom they have shown themselves ready to embrace as a brother. They have their prejudices, they acknowledge—and he perhaps has his. Many forms and observances may to them be dear and venerable, through the force of early habit and association, which to a stranger in their Israel may appear uncouth, unnecessary, or even marked with a shade of ridicule. They pity Mr. Wakefield's peculiar and insulated situation. Separating through the purest motives from one church, he has not found another with which he is inclined to associate; divided by difference of opinions from one class of christians, and by dissonance of taste from another, he finds the transition too violent from the college to the conventicle: he worships alone because he stands alone; and is, naturally perhaps, led to undervalue that fellowship which has been lost to him between his early predilections and his later opinions. If, however, the dissenters are not so happy as to gain his affection, they must be allowed to urge their claims upon his esteem. They wish him to reflect, that neither his classical knowledge, nor his critical acumen, nor his acknowledged talents, set him so high in the esteem of good men, as that integrity which he possesses in common with those whom he de-

spises; they believe further consideration would suggest to him, that it were more candid to pass over those peculiarities which have originated in a delicate conscience and the fervour of devotion; and they cannot help asking, Whether they had reason to expect the severity of sarcastic ridicule from him, whose best praise it is that he has imitated their virtues and shared their sacrifices?

The dissenters, however, do not make it their boast that they have nothing to reform. They have, perhaps, always been more conspicuous for principle than for taste; their practices are founded upon a prevalence of religious fervour, an animation and warmth of piety, which, if it no longer exists, it is vain to simulate. But what they do make their boast is, that they acknowledge no principle which forbids them to reform; that they have no leave to ask of bishops, synods, or parliaments, in order to lay aside forms which have become vapid. They are open to conviction; they are ready to receive with thankfulness every sober and liberal remark which may assist them to improve their religious addresses, and model them to the temper of the public mind. But, with regard to those practices of superabundant devotion which have drawn down upon them the indignation of the critic, it is the opinion of those who best know the dissenters of the present day,

that they might have been suffered to fall quietly of themselves: they are supported by no authority, defrayed by no impost. If they make long prayers, it is at the expense only of their own breath and spirits; no widows' houses are devoured by it. If the present generation yawn and slumber over the exercises which their fathers attended with pious alacrity, the sons will of course learn to shorten them. If the disposition of their public services wants animation, as perhaps it does, the silent pews will be deserted one by one, and they will be obliged to seek some other mode of engaging the attention of their audience. But modes and forms affect not the essence of public worship; that may be performed with a form or without one; by words alone, or by symbolical expressions, combined with or separated from instruction; with or without the assistance of a particular order appointed to officiate in leading the devotions: it may be celebrated one day in seven, or in eight, or in ten. In many of these particulars a certain deference should be had to the sentiments of that society with which, upon the whole, we think it best to connect ourselves, and as times and manners change, these circumstances will vary; but the root of the practice is too strongly interwoven with the texture of the human frame ever to be abandoned. While man has wants, he will pray; while he is sensible

of blessings, he will offer praise; while he has common wants and common blessings, he will pray and praise in company with his fellows; and while he feels himself a social being, he will not be persuaded to lay aside social worship.

It must, however, be acknowledged, that, in order to give public worship all the grace and efficacy of which it is susceptible, much alteration is necessary. It is necessary here, as in every other concern, that timely reformation should prevent neglect. Much might be done by judgement, taste, and a devotional spirit united, to improve the plan of our religious assemblies. Should a genius arise amongst us qualified for such a task, and in circumstances favourable to his being listened to, he would probably remark first, on the construction of our churches, so ill adapted are a great part of them to the purposes either of hearing or seeing. He would reprobate those little gloomy solitary cells, planned by the spirit of aristocracy, which deform the building no less to the eye of taste than to the eye of benevolence, and insulating each family within its separate inclosure, favour at once the pride of rank and the laziness of indulgence. He might choose for these structures something of the amphitheatrical form, where the minister, on a raised platform, should be beheld with ease by the whole wave of people, at once bending together in deep humiliation, or spreading forth their hands in the earn-

estness of petition. It would certainly be found desirable that the people should themselves have a large share in the performance of the service, as the intermixture of their voices would both introduce more variety and greater animation; provided pains were taken by proper teaching to enable them to bear their part with a decorum and propriety, which, it must be confessed, we do not see at present amongst those whose public services possess the advantage of responses. The explaining, and teaching them to recite, such hymns and collects as it might be thought proper they should bear a part in, would form a pleasing and useful branch of the instruction of young people, and of the lower classes; it would give them an interest in the public service, and might fill up agreeably a vacant hour either on the Sunday or on some other leisure day, especially if they were likewise regularly instructed in singing for the same purpose. As we have never seen, perhaps we can hardly conceive, the effect which the united voices of a whole congregation, all in the lively expression of one feeling, would have upon the mind. We should then perceive not only that we were doing the same thing in the same place, but that we were doing it with one accord. The deep silence of listening expectation, the burst of united praises, the solemn pauses that invite reflection, the varied tones of humiliation, gratitude, or persuasion, would swell and melt the heart by turns;

nor would there be any reason to guard against the wandering eye, when every object it rested on must forcibly recall it to the duties of the place. —Possibly it might be found expedient to separate worship from instruction; the learned teacher from the leader of the public devotions, in whom voice, and popular talents, might perhaps be allowed to supersede a more deep and critical acquaintance with the doctrines of theology. One consequence, at least, would follow such a separation, that instruction would be given more systematically.—Nothing that is taught at all is taught in so vague and desultory a manner as the doctrines of religion. A congregation may attend for years, even a good preacher, and never hear the evidences of either natural or revealed religion regularly explained to them: they may attend for years, and never hear a connected system of moral duties extending to the different situations and relations of life: they may attend for years, and not even gain any clear idea of the history and chronology of the Old and New Testament, which are read to them every Sunday. They will hear abundance of excellent doctrine, and will often feel their hearts warmed and their minds edified; but their ideas upon these subjects will be confused and imperfect, because they are treated on in a manner so totally different from every thing else which bears the name of instruc-

tion. This is probably owing, in a great measure, to the custom of prefixing to every pulpit-discourse a sentence, taken indiscriminately from any part of the Scriptures, under the name of a text, which at first implying an exposition, was afterwards used to suggest a subject; and is now, by degrees, dwindling into a motto.—Still, however, the custom subsists; and while it serves to supersede a more methodical course of instruction, tends to keep up in the minds of the generality of hearers a very superstitious idea,—not now entertained, it is to be presumed, by the generality of those who teach,—of the equal sacredness and importance of every part of so miscellaneous a collection.

If these insulated discourses, of which each is complete in itself, and therefore can have but little compass, were digested into a regular plan of lectures, supported by a course of reading, to which the audience might be directed, it would have the further advantage of rousing the inattentive and restraining the rambling hearer by the interest which would be created by such a connected series of information. They would occupy a larger space in the mind, they would more frequently be the subject of recollection and meditation; there would be a fear of missing one link in such a chain of truths; and the more intelligent part of a congregation might find a useful and interesting employment in assisting the teacher in the in-

struction of those who were not able to comprehend instruction with the same facility as themselves. When such a course of instruction had been delivered, it would not be expected that discourses, into which men of genius and learning had digested their best thoughts, should be thrown by, or brought forward again, as it were, by stealth; but they would be regularly and avowedly repeated at proper intervals. It is usual upon the continent for a set of sermons to be delivered in several churches, each of which has its officiating minister for the stated public worship; and thus a whole district partakes the advantage of the labours of a man eminent for composition. Perhaps it might be desirable to join to religious information some instruction in the laws of our country, which are, or ought to be, founded upon morals; and which, by a strange solecism, are obligatory upon all, and scarcely promulgated, much less explained.—Many ideas will offer themselves to a thinking man, who wishes not to abolish, but to improve the public worship of his country. These are only hints, offered with diffidence and respect, to those who are able to judge of and carry them into effect.

Above all, it would be desirable to separate from religion that idea of gloom which in this country has but too generally accompanied it. The fact cannot be denied; the cause must be

sought, partly in our national character, which I am afraid is not naturally either very cheerful or very social, and which we shall do well to meliorate by every possible attention to our habits of life;—and partly to the colour of our religious systems. No one who embraces the common idea of future torments, together with the doctrine of election and reprobation, the insufficiency of virtue to escape the wrath of God, and the strange absurdity which, it should seem, through similarity of sound alone has been admitted as an axiom, that sins committed against an infinite being do therefore deserve infinite punishment—no one, I will venture to assert, can believe such tenets, and have them often in his thoughts, and yet be cheerful. Whence a system has arisen so incompatible with that justice and benevolence, which in the discourses of our Saviour are represented as the most essential attributes of the Divine Being, is not easy to trace. It is probable, however, that power, being the most prominent feature in our conceptions of the Creator, and that of which we see the most striking image here on earth (there being a greater portion of uncontrouled power than of unmixed wisdom or goodness to be found amongst human beings), the Deity would naturally be likened to an absolute monarch;—and most absolute monarchs having been tyrants, jealous of their sovereignty, averse to

freedom of investigation, ordering affairs, not with a view to the happiness of their subjects, but to the advancement of their own glory; not to be approached but with rich gifts and offerings; bestowing favours, not in proportion to merit, but from the pure influence of caprice and blind partiality; to those who have offended them severe, and unforgiving, except induced to pardon by the importunate intercession of some favourite; confining their enemies, when they had overcome them, after a contest, in deep dark dungeons under ground, or putting them to death in the prolonged misery of excruciating tortures—these features of human depravity have been most faithfully transferred to the Supreme Being; and men have imaged to themselves how a Nero or a Domitian would have acted, if from the extent of their dominion there had been no escape, and to the duration of it no period.

These ideas of the vulgar belief, terrible, but as yet vague and undefined, passed into the speculations of the schoolmen, by whom they were combined with the metaphysical idea of eternity, arranged in specific propositions, fixed in creeds, and elaborated into systems, till at length they have been sublimed into all the tremendous horrors of the Calvinistic faith. These doctrines, it is true, among thinking people, are losing ground; but there is still apparent, in that class called se-

rious christians, a tenderness in exposing them; a sort of leaning towards them,—as in walking over a precipice one should lean to the safest side; an idea that they are, if not true, at least good to be believed; and that a salutary error is better than a dangerous truth. But that error can neither be salutary nor harmless, which attributes to the Deity injustice and cruelty; and that religion must have the worst of tendencies, which renders it dangerous for man to imitate the being whom he worships. Let those who hold such tenets consider, that the invisible Creator has no name, and is identified only by his character; and they will tremble to think what being they are worshiping, when they invoke a power capable of producing existence, in order to continue it in never-ending torments. The God of the Assembly's Catechism is not the same God with the deity of Thomson's Seasons, and of Hutcheson's Ethics. Unity of character in what we adore is much more essential than unity of person. We often boast, and with reason, of the purity of our religion, as opposed to the grossness of the theology of the Greeks and Romans; but we should remember, that cruelty is as much worse than licentiousness, as a Moloch is worse than a satyr.—When will christians permit themselves to believe that the same conduct which gains them the approbation of good men here, will secure the favour of Heaven

hereafter? When will they cease making their court to their Maker by the same servile debasement and affectation of lowliness by which the vain potentates of the earth are flattered? When a harmless and well-meaning man, in the exaggerated figures of theological rhetoric, calls himself the vilest of sinners, it is in precisely the same spirit of false humility in which the courtier uses degrading and disqualifying expressions, when he speaks of himself in his adulatory addresses to his sovereign. When a good man draws near the close of a life, not free indeed from faults, but pure from crime, a life spent in the habitual exercise of all those virtues which adorn and dignify human nature, and in the uniform approach to that perfection which is confessedly unattainable in this imperfect state; when a man—perhaps like Dr. Price, whose name will be ever pronounced with affectionate veneration and deep regard by all the friends of philosophy, virtue, and mankind—is about to resign his soul into the hands of his Maker, he ought to do it, not only with a reliance on his mercy, but his justice; a generous confidence and pious resignation should be blended in his deportment. It does not become him to pay the blasphemous homage of deprecating the wrath of God, when he ought to throw himself into the arms of his love. He is not to think that virtue is one thing here, and another

in heaven; or that he on whom blessings and eulogiums are ready to burst from all honest tongues, can be an object of punishment with Him who is infinitely more benevolent than any of his creatures.

These remarks may be thought foreign to the subject in question; but in fact they are not so. Public worship will be tinctured with gloom while our ideas of its object are darkened by superstition; it will be infected with hypocrisy while its professions and tenets run counter to the genuine unperverted moral sense of mankind; it will not meet the countenance of philosophers so long as we are obliged to unlearn our ethics, in order to learn divinity. Let it be considered that these opinions greatly favour immorality. The doctrine that all are vile, and equally merit a state of punishment, is an idea as consolatory to the profligate, as it is humiliating to the saint; and that is one reason why it has always been a favourite doctrine. The indecent confidence of a Dodd*, and the debasing terrors of a Johnson, or of more blameless men than he, spring from one and the same source. It prevents the genuine workings

* "And admitted, as I trust I shall be, to the realms of bliss before you, I shall hail your arrival there with transport, and rejoice to acknowledge that you was my comforter, my advocate, and my friend."—*Letter from Dr. Dodd to Dr. Johnson.* See Boswell's Life of Johnson, vol. ii. p. 140.

of real penitence, by enjoining confessions of imaginary demerit; it quenches religious gratitude, because conceiving only of two states of retribution, both in the extreme; and feeling that our crimes, whatever they may be, cannot have deserved the one, we are not sufficiently thankful for the prospect of the other, which we look upon as only a necessary alternative. Lastly, it dissolves the connexion between religion and common life, by introducing a set of phrases and a standard of moral feeling, totally different from those ideas of praise and blame, merit and demerit, upon which we do and must act in our commerce with our fellow-creatures.

There are periods in which the human mind seems to slumber, but this is not one of them. A keen spirit of research is now abroad, and demands reform. Perhaps in none of the nations of Europe will their articles of faith, or their church establishments, or their modes of worship, be able to maintain their ground for many years in exactly the same position in which they stand at present. Religion and manners reciprocally act upon one another. As religion, well understood, is a most powerful agent in meliorating and softening our manners; so, on the other hand, manners, as they advance in cultivation, tend to correct and refine our religion. Thus, to a nation in any degree acquainted with the social feelings, human sacrifices

and sanguinary rites could never long appear obligatory. The mild spirit of christianity has, no doubt, had its influence in softening the ferocity of the Gothic times; and the increasing humanity of the present period will, in its turn, produce juster ideas of christianity, and diffuse through the solemnities of our worship, the celebration of our sabbaths, and every observance connected with religion, that air of amenity and sweetness, which is the offspring of literature and the peaceful intercourses of society. The age which has demolished dungeons, rejected torture, and given so fair a prospect of abolishing the iniquity of the slave-trade, cannot long retain among its articles of belief the gloomy perplexities of Calvinism, and the heart-withering perspective of cruel and never-ending punishments.

THE END.

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